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VOICE IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF
A SECOND LANGUAGE METHODS COURSE

A Dissertation Presented

by

FRANCIS M. BAILEY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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School of Education

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VOICE IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A SECOND LANGUAGE METHODS COURSE

A Dissertation Presented

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Approved as to style and content by:

Jerri Willett, Chair

Judy Solsken, Member

Yukie Horiba, Member

Bailey Jackson, Dean
School of Education

To my mother and father, for the love that lasts a lifetime

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ABSTRACT

VOICE IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF

A SECOND LANGUAGE METHODS COURSE

SEPTEMBER, 1993

FRANCIS M. BAILEY

B.S., ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

M.A.T., SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Directed by: Professor Jerri Willett

This is a report of an ethnographic study of a graduate-level Methods course for ESL/Bilingual teachers at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The course is organized around task-based, small group, collaborative learning. One of the intriguing aspects of the course is the opportunities it provides for students to learn about Whole Language teaching and collaborative learning both by studying about these topics as part of the course content and by experiencing them as students within the class.

This study researched the enactment of collaborative learning by investigating the discourse of one of the course's small groups. My research questions revolved issues of voice--the conditions in which students are both able to speak and to be heard--in the small group. The structure and distribution of voice among group members was

a primary research focus. A theoretical framework was developed which allows the concept of voice to be operationalized for purposes of discourse analysis. Voice emerges out of the social interactions of participants engaged in an institutionally situated activity and cannot be reduced solely to the characteristics or performance of an individual (cf. McDermott, 1986).

The structure of the group's collaborative dialogue, a set of communal norms operating within the group, and the social context created within the course are investigated through a micro-analysis of the group discourse. The findings reveal a set of norms operating within the small group: active participation, students viewing one another as "resources," and the privileging of members' personal knowledge. These norms, among others, created the social conditions necessary for a truly collaborative dialogue. However, these norms also proved problematic as they fostered a set of communal tensions related to the educational ramifications of muting the instructor's voice and the ways that the discourse structure positioned a Japanese member of the group. Her minimal participation in the group's early meetings, the negotiations which took place to ensure that she would have a voice, and her own revealing views of collaborative dialogue provide rich insights into the complex nature of multicultural, collaborative learning.

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CHAPTER 1

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH IN A SECOND LANGUAGE METHODS COURSE

Introduction

The field of second language teaching is in the midst of a paradigm shift. On two crucial fronts--language and epistemology--our field's understanding of what knowledge and skills teachers must possess, and how one goes about gaining insights into classroom practices, is being challenged at its core. These shifts in our field's foundations are raising new questions about how teacher educators should prepare second language teachers.

Our view of language has been greatly enriched over the last two decades by contributions from fields such as sociolinguistics, communications, sociology, linguistics, and ethnography. It has become clear to many in second language teaching that the rather narrow view of language inherited from theoretical and structural linguistics, with their emphasis on structural components of language, is inadequate for understanding the communicative needs of our ESL (English as a Second Language) students, many of whom are immigrants newly arrived in our society. In essence, our field is moving from a focus on language to a focus on communication (Acton, 1984). The vast number of articles and books in the last decade on the "communicative approach"

to second language teaching attests to the widespread interest in this perspective.

The epistemological shift in our field is evidenced in two interrelated ways. First, the second language teaching research base has been seriously called into question. For the last fifty years, we have used linguistics, psychology, and the behavioral sciences to provide much of the theoretical and empirical base for our field's understanding of classroom practice. However, it is now apparent that educators' research questions and goals are often not satisfactorily investigated by our traditional research base (Larsen-Freeman, 1990). Ethnographic and other qualitative research perspectives are beginning to be used to investigate questions central to second language teachers and learners.

Second, the goal of research in education has, in large part, shifted from a search for the universal toward a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the particular. The heyday of the Methods--universal solutions to the problems of teaching language--are long gone (c.f. Prahbu, 1990). In their place is a growing realization that, like politics, all education is local. The particulars of students and teacher, the school, the community, and the larger society in which they are embedded all have a profound impact on what happens in the classroom (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). It is clear that our field must create a research agenda which

addresses the complex issues of teaching and learning in real second language classrooms.

Conversely, teacher education programs are often placed in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, they are helping students construct theories of teaching that account for the role of local context in teaching and learning. At the same time, they are being asked to educate students who are often far removed from their own sites of teaching. For example, many TESOL master's programs are heavily populated with international students who do not plan to teach in the United States. Teacher educators must confront in their own practice the paradox of providing an education that prepares students for the realities of their own teaching context in an educational site that is far removed from that context.

A third shift in our field--one that perhaps cannot be characterized as a paradigm shift but that is important nevertheless--is the issue of the ethical and moral dimensions of language teaching in a multicultural society and world (Peirce, 1989; Brown, 1991; Pennycook, 1989). Our field is beginning to ask questions which transcend technical issues of how best to impart information about a specific language to a learner. Instead, we are now asking what the proper functions of ESL or bilingual classes are: to assimilate students into the mainstream of our society? or to ensure competent low-wage workers for our faltering economy? And what are the ethical obligations of educators (teachers, scholars, and researchers) to our students and

society? to reveal and help our students overcome barriers to being fully functioning citizens (Gee, 1990)? or to reproduce in our schooling practices the current social structure which advantages some groups over others (Giroux, 1983)?

These ethical questions cannot be answered once and for all through a well funded research program, but must be viewed as problematics--issues that will continually be open to question and debate. The important point here is that these questions are being asked and many in our field are struggling for equitable answers. As a teacher educator, it is crucial that I develop a better understanding of the implications of these varied issues for teacher education. In order to do that, I have completed an ethnographic investigation of a Methods and Materials class for ESL/Bilingual teachers. This course is structured to be a Whole Language, collaborative, learner-centered approach to teacher education and has provided a rich research site for the exploration of how these shifts in our field's foundations affect the way teachers are currently being prepared for the second language classroom.

Discourse in Teaching and Teacher Education

In this section I will outline three bodies of thought in teaching and teacher education that this research builds upon. The first literature is focused on the act of teaching and is concerned with viewing teaching as a

linguistic or communicative process. The second literature addresses issues in teacher education and frames that educational process in terms of socializing students into the profession of teaching. These two disparate literatures are united by their interest in framing these educational processes in terms of discourse.

The Discourse of Instruction

Over the last twenty years there has developed a body of research and thought that focuses upon the structures and functions of the language used in classrooms for instructional purposes (Cazden, 1988; 1986; Green, 1983; Stubbs, 1983; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1972). Green (1983) has argued that teaching is a creative process--creating environments, activities, and situations for learning within classrooms through instructional discourse:

> The vehicle for this creative process is communication--communication between teacher and students, among students, and between students and other adults. Teaching, therefore, is a linguistic process. As such, communication is subject to the rules and expectations of conversation. Classroom events, like other communicative events, are constructed by participants as they engage in face-to-face interactions. (pp. 183-84).

The organization of this communicative process is central to the work of teachers.

Mehan (1979) has researched the structure of what is perhaps the archetypal form of educational discourse: recitation. His analysis shows how the question/answer

sequence engaged in in classrooms is actually a tripartite sequence: initiation (by teacher), response (by student), and evaluation (by teacher). This form of educational discourse has interesting implications for schooling. Schools are infamous for their unending evaluative procedures (e.g., class grades, class tests, standardized tests, I.Q. tests, G.P.A.). Mehan's research shows how this evaluative frame reaches down into moment-by-moment interaction within classroom talk. In recitation, students are evaluated each and every time they gain the floor and speak. In addition, Bossert (1979) has demonstrated that recitation makes strict classroom discipline a necessity, as the teacher must maintain order and a common focus in an entire class of students.

The points I want to make are twofold. First, the act of teaching can be viewed in terms of the types of instructional discourse which are used within the classroom (e.g., recitation, lecture, sharing time, collaborative dialogue). The structure and content of these instructional discourses have implications for a host of fundamental issues in schooling, including evaluation, student learning, discipline, and teacher/student and student/student relations.

Second, educational researchers have become increasingly interested in the discourse types used in a classroom, their structure, and their function. This interest is evidenced by the growing body of qualitative

research on the discourse of particular classroom events, such as "sharing time" (Michaels, 1981), reading lessons (McDermott, 1978; Bloome & Golden, 1982), recitation (Mehan, 1979), science lessons (Lemke, 1982), literature discussion (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991), and cooperative learning (Wells et al., 1990).[1]

This type of research has been particularly useful in identifying ways in which the structure of classroom events systemically disadvantages students from historically marginalized groups within the United States: African-Americans (Michaels, 1981; Heath, 1983;), Native Americans (Philips, 1983; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), and Hawaiians (Au, 1980). This body of research and thought has deeply influenced my own conceptions of teaching, teacher education, and this research project. One of the goals of this research is to identify a particular type of instructional discourse used within the Methods course--collaborative dialogue-- describe its rationale and structure, and explore its function within the course as a whole.

Discourse in Teacher Education

The process of entering a new field, such as teaching, is bound up in complex ways with learning the language of the new field--its jargon, technical vocabulary, and styles

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1. For an excellent review of classroom discourse literature, see Cazden (1988).

of writing and talking. Gee (1990) argues that in order for someone to be accepted into a particular social role (e.g., ESL teacher, construction worker, doctor), he/she must acquire the "Discourse" of that social group. He uses Discourse (with a capital "D") to mean

> a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group. (p. 143)

In order to acquire this Discourse, Gee argues that a learner must serve apprenticeships in social settings where people are interacting within a particular Discourse. For example, learners cannot become members of a Discourse simply by becoming familiar with a field's technical literature or passively observing others. Rather, learners must become engaged in the social world of other members of the profession.

> Further, these social practices are never <u>just</u> language or literacy practices. They always also involve ways of acting, interacting, being, thinking, valuing, believing, gesturing, dressing, using various 'props' ... as well as ways of using language (written or spoken). (p. 174)

Gee's views on Discourse provide a frame for viewing teacher education as a process of <u>apprenticeship</u> into the complex Discourse that makes up the field of teaching. This perspective provides a warrant for asking questions about the Discourse of the teacher education class or program and the nature of the apprenticeships which students are engaged in within the class and without (e.g., practicums, teaching, observing in second language classes).

A second, and closely related, perspective on teacher education is found in the work of Freeman (1991b). He argues that the central task of teacher education is that of socializing learners into the professional teaching discourse of their field. His research into the education of master's degree students in a second language teaching program (1991a) demonstrates how students' acquisition of particular concepts in the discourse of the program provides a way for them to re-conceptualize their own practice of teaching. In other words, the discourse of second language teaching provides a vocabulary for thinking about teaching.

Freeman (1991b) argues that "teacher education can ... influence teachers' understandings by helping them to articulate their given explanations for what they do" (p. 6). He suggests, following Shulman (1988), that we need to help students "to make the tacit explicit." The discourse of a teacher education class or program, he argues, can provide a language for students to name, question, and reconceive their own practice.

Freeman (1991b) adds an important caution, that the acquisition of a professional discourse is not a linear process in which a learner's previous language and conceptions are erased and replaced with the new discourse. Rather, it is additive. For example, practicing teachers may emerge from a teacher education program with two teaching discourses: a local one used in their home schools, and the academic discourse acquired in the teacher education

program. Both can be used to make sense of the teacher's own classroom practices. However, they also mark membership in two different communities.

The acquisition and use of a discourse is both a social and a cognitive process. As Gee (1990) has argued, using a particular form of language marks one as a member (or not) of a particular social group. Hence, the creation of an academic community in which a discourse of teaching is used is particularly important. In addition to this social function, a professional discourse provides ways for teachers to conceive (and reconceive) their teaching practices. Language is the link that unites both the social world and an individual's cognitive world (Vygotsky, 1986).

Hermeneutics and Praxis

Beyer (1988) cautions against viewing teacher preparation solely as a process of socializing learners to the current discourse, knowledges, and practice of schooling. He challenges educators to think of teacher education as more than just a technical preparation for teaching and to consider teaching's political and moral underpinnings:

> In confining teacher preparation to a technical domain, the role of schools in promoting social and cultural reproduction is actually aided, in the process cutting short the possibilities of more democratic school practice and social transformation. As technicist approaches to teacher preparation avoid critical engagement with large issues, they tacitly support the political and ideological interests schools tend to promote. (p. 176)

This critical perspective on schooling requires a different conception of the function of teacher education. Rather than focusing exclusively on the preparation of teaching to fit into the current institutional structures, teacher educators must help teachers to question and critique schooling practices. In essence, Beyer (1988) argues that teacher education should be viewed in terms of hermeneutics and praxis. Hermeneutics embodies a

> communal picture of knowledge in which understanding is intimately related to the actions of people, where knowledge matters because of the way it fosters social interaction, mutual understanding (if not agreement), democratic, communal participation, and more preferable worlds. Such a humanized, contextualized view of knowledge alters fundamentally what we can reasonably require or expect from education and social situations. (p. 81)

This hermeneutical perspective on education would organize teacher education around dialogue, collaboration, and communal action. It would explicitly link education with equality and issues of justice and democracy. It would also challenge commonsense views of current schooling practices and raise a host of questions: Why do teachers and students have an adversarial relationship? Whose knowledge is privileged in schools? What is the function of schooling? What <u>should</u> its function be? Further, teachers and teacher educators would raise these issues about the teacher education program itself as well as about other educational institutions.

Praxis is the combination of theoretical knowledge, reflection, and practical action and is fundamental to the

practice of teaching. Teaching is very much a hands-on profession and teachers are challenged to explicitly consider both the theoretical basis of our practice and also the practical consequences of our theories. The combination of action (e.g., teaching or research), reflection, and explicit theoretical modeling is an important part of being educators and is integral to teacher education.

In many ways, the Methods course resonates with Beyer's concerns. It is explicitly designed to challenge current educational practices and encourages students to question, reflect upon, and critique their own conceptions of teaching. The collaborative groups formed in the class function in complex and messy ways to create hermeneutical knowledge and understandings. Further, the task-based and experiential nature of the course creates the conditions for the process of praxis. In the communal process of creating theoretical knowledge through dialogue, reflection, and practical action (i.e., teaching classmates), students are challenged to name, question, and reconceptualize their own theories and practices of schooling (see Freeman, 1991b).

Conclusion

A technical approach to teacher preparation which merely prepares teachers to fit into existing educational institutions is inadequate. One of our primary goals must be to encourage teachers to question and critique current schooling practices (including their own teacher education

program). On the other hand, teachers must be supported in their apprenticeships in education so that they can come to understand and function with the current Discourse found in schools. We must help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in schools.

Teacher education programs, as Freeman (1991a; 1991b) suggests, can provide a discourse for teachers to examine their own teaching practices. For some this language will provide a way to articulate their own tacit conceptions of teaching and learning. For experienced teachers, this discourse can provide an additional language for reconceiving their own practice and questioning and critiquing the Discourse of schooling.

The Methods course which is the focus of this research is organized around collaboration, dialogue, and practical action. In many ways, the course is structured to grapple with the issues of the professional discourse of second language teaching and the Discourse of the field of teaching. It provides a site for learners to articulate and reconceive their own ideas and practices. Further, it gives learners in their collaborative groups a powerful experience with a form of instructional discourse that values dialogue, communal action, and the voice of learners.

Voice

The concept of voice is central to this research project. It signals an interest in who gets to speak and be

heard within this course. In a course organized around dialogue, it is crucial that there be a social context in which students have opportunities to speak and peers are prepared to hear, consider, and act on what they say. In a multicultural classroom, it is all too easy for international students to be silenced and marginalized. The Methods course provides a site for the exploration of the social conditions which can support or mute students' voices.

The concept of voice connects closely with the ideas of hermeneutics and praxis. The instructor has structured the course to give each student an opportunity to claim a voice in the class and to allow all these voices to join in dialogue in the small group work which is the heart of the course. The focus of the small group collaboration is not only on the practical task at hand but also on the process of conducting a dialogue with a diverse set of group members. If praxis is an integral component of teacher education, then we need to explore how in this course the linking of theory (i.e., course content) and practice (i.e., collaboration and small group teaching) are connected through dialogue.

A second dimension of voice which I am interested in is the ability of students to enter into the Discourse of the field of second language teaching. If teacher education is viewed in terms of an apprenticeship into a particular Discourse, then one of the goals must be to support

students' own construction of their own professional voice within that Discourse. This implies an ability to read the literature of the field and to speak (and write) in such a way that other professionals in the field can understand and respect their ideas. Voice in this sense is meant to include the ability to use the conventions of discourse and the conceptual frames of a particular field. This conception of voice focuses on the membership of students in a particular community of teachers, education professionals, and scholars which is larger than the class in which they are enrolled.

Gee (1990) argues that scholars have an ethical obligation to uncover unknown patterns, norms, and structures which have the potential to disadvantage one group over another. I would add that as teacher educators we also have an obligation to try to understand how particular educational practices silence or amplify the voices of students--in particular, traditionally disadvantaged groups within school and society. And more generally, we need to try to come to some practical wisdom about the central features of a social environment which can support students' voices.

I will now turn to the research agenda that allowed me to investigate these concepts.

Research Site, Interests, and Questions

In this section, I introduce the site of the research project, the particular interests that have guided the research, and a set of specific research questions.

Site

The ethnographic research project which forms the empirical basis of this dissertation was conducted in the Methods and Materials for ESL/Bilingual course at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the fall of 1991, taught by Professor Jerri Willett. The course was centered around a "Whole Language" perspective (Rigg, 1991) and provided students with an "interactive, collaborative, heterogenous, and supportive environment in which to explore and reflect upon Whole Language learning and teaching" (Willett et al., 1990).

The course was composed of 33 students. Roughly a third were international students (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, German) and the rest were from the United States. The students came to the class with a wide variety of teaching experiences, from veteran second language teachers to newcomers to the field. The class was predominantly female; only six males were enrolled.

Research Interests

My reasons for conducting research in this particular site are diverse. The uncertainties present in the field of

second language education clearly provide a challenge to the second language educator. Despite the lack of a consensus on what to teach and how to teach, a growing appreciation of the local nature of education, and the emergence of new ways of conceptualizing language and research, educators are still expected to prepare teachers to teach.

As one might expect in this climate of uncertainty, programs have devised very different approaches to teacher education (Grosse, 1991). It is my assumption that we need to better understand how <u>particular</u> language programs are addressing these issues. It would be useful to the field itself to better understand how programs are educating their students: What are the goals of these programs? How do they go about the process of education? How do students respond to these programs? Are they useful in preparing teachers to teach?

As Saranson et al. (1986) have noted, in teacher education

> what is very much needed are detailed descriptions of how teachers are actually trained. We have a surfeit of attractive course descriptions, unassailable statements of aims and hopes, and vague generalizations of what the future teacher is experiencing and learning in the course of training. What we need to know is not only to what the student is exposed, but the specifics of how it is structured, who structured it, and the role and perception of the student. (p. 120)

I, too, believe that the field of second language education is in need of detailed information about the nature of teacher education courses and programs in order to provide an empirical basis for discussions of classroom

practices. We also need to create new ways of viewing teacher education which embrace the complexity of educating teachers in an age of change and uncertainty. These frames must be able to provide insight into particular teacher education practices in real classrooms while connecting to the larger frames of discourse in which schooling is embedded--educational institutions, communities, and society. This research project can contribute to these goals by providing a richly textured description and discussion of an innovative teacher education course.

This research provides insights into questions concerning teacher education courses which cut across particular subject-area concerns. The organization of this course around small group work, collaborative learning, facilitation, multicultural groupings, and peer learning are issues that extend well beyond ESL teacher education and are of potential interest to educators in virtually all settings (Sharan, 1990). In addition, issues of voice are contested in a wide variety of fields, disciplines, and communities. A framework for researching voice in a particular site may be useful for educators in other sites as well as for others outside the field of education. Our society is becoming increasingly concerned about issues of multiculturalism and this research provides insights into this issue by describing how the course is structured and enacted and its consequences for international students.

With the rapid changes in our conceptions of language and language learning, there is a definite need in our field to better understand how to assimilate these new concepts into our teacher education courses. Our continued confusion and disagreement about the means and the goals of educational programs for immigrants and non-native English speakers require that we move beyond the merely technical preparation of teachers. We must challenge second language teachers to come to their own understanding of proper educational practices and join in critical dialogue about these issues in their own schools and communities.

While this research project may contribute to the field of teacher education, I have already put it to more immediate and personal use. I have used it to explore, reflect on, and improve my own professional practice as a second language educator. For this reason, I cannot view the Methods class as merely a convenient "research site" which provided me with an opportunity to investigate a set of research questions. Rather, this research project has emerged from my interest in this particular course and its implications for my own views on teacher education. This personal and applied dimension to the research is one of the aspects that I find most exciting and that sets it apart from many other research projects.

This research has been collaborative in a variety of ways. I have collaborated closely with the course instructor in conducting the research; together we have

attempted to apply the insights the research has produced to the development of the course structure. The "action research" (Nunan, 1990) component of this project has been productive and rewarding, and is ongoing.

The research has also been collaborative with the students in the course. The type of research I have conducted has attempted to break down traditional divisions between researcher and "subjects." For example, my practice of audiotaping and transcribing small group meetings provided data with which one of the small groups considered their own discourse within their group (see "Process Meeting," Chapter 3). In addition, students have read, confirmed, and critiqued earlier drafts of much of this report. Hence, their own views and opinions are an integral part of this research. Further, one class member, Lisa, has used this research to inform her own practice of facilitation. I have attempted in this research to highlight the voices of the students and instructor.

I have taken a collaborative stance toward this project, hoping that my role as facilitator within one of the small groups would be beneficial for the group members. I have attempted to conduct research which would not only prove useful for academics far removed from this class but also inform the evolution of the Methods course itself (Johnson, 1992).

Research Questions

The course I have chosen for this research is on the cutting edge of many of the changes in teacher education, and therefore provided a fertile site for exploring these issues. I have used this research to explore the nature of voice among the course participants and its implications for learning and teaching. This includes "operationalizing" the term "voice" so that what it looks like (or sounds like) is clear and can be recognized in contexts outside this particular setting.

The heterogeneous nature of the student body has provided for the exploration of cultural issues related to voice. The small groups provided an ideal location for viewing collaborative learning and its outcomes for the participants, and my role as a facilitator for one of the small groups has allowed me access to the group discourse. This small group is the central focus of this study.

The following is a summary of the primary questions that were investigated in this research:

1. What are the primary structures, activities, values, and norms of this course?

2. What are the defining features of voice within particular events in the course? In particular, how can it be determined that a participant in the course has a voice (or not)?

3. How is voice socially constructed (or silenced) within the course?

4. Within a particular small group in the course, how is collaboration interactionally accomplished? In particular, what types of meanings are negotiated and how are issues of voice discussed, contested, and enacted?

5. How do students view the course? What do they report learning as a result of their participation in the course?

These five research questions guided my conduct of this research project. I would like to turn now to a discussion of how this research was conducted and the theoretical assumptions which guided it.

Ethnographic Research

The conduct of research brings to life a researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality and how one goes about gaining insight into that reality. The perspective which I consciously bring to this project has been influenced by a body of thought exploring the social construction of reality: the perspective that people are profoundly social beings and that to understand a social enterprise like education we must understand that our very sense of reality is a product of the norms and values of the social world we inhabit (Berger & Luckman, 1967); further, that our sense of social reality is constructed through continual face-to-face interaction with others (Moerman, 1988; Goffman, 1959).

The idea that all of our perceived realities are social constructions provides a conceptual tool for the design of this research. It provides a warrant for creating what Geertz (1973) calls a "thick description" of a community. By this, he means collecting data in such a way that the meaning systems operating within the symbolic world of the participants are revealed. It is not enough to capture the

behavior of social interaction; we must come to understand its meanings and attempt to gain some insight into the reasons such behavior and meanings are enacted within a particular context.

This view of the social construction of reality is an ontological statement about the world. It suggests that our knowledge and understanding of the world is constrained by the norms, values, theories, and myths in which we are enmeshed. While the term "constraint" emphasizes the inherent limitations of our perspectives, it fails to capture the idea that it is precisely these norms, values, theories and myths which afford us the ability to interpret the world. While we are never able to step outside our perspective--viewing life without a framework would result in a perception of nonsense--we can come to understand, at least in part, what those constraints are and perhaps even modify them or adopt new ones more to our liking.

This view of the world also has epistemological implications in terms of how we view knowledge and its acquisition. Any attempt to probe reality is limited by our own views (and those of the communities in which we live) of the methodologies for understanding the Other and the "world out there." Research questions, methodologies, and techniques both constrain and enable my research.

Classroom Ethnography

Classrooms need to be investigated both in terms of how classroom participants jointly construct lessons (Allwright, 1984) and how the classroom functions as a part of a wider social system. The research perspective which can aid the systematic investigation of these social worlds is ethnography. The following is a set of central principles which inform and guide my conception of educational ethnographic research (Peacock, 1986; Goetz & LeCompte 1984):

1. **The researcher takes on a participant/observer role.** My role as a facilitator in this class affords the opportunity to gain "insider" perspective and structures opportunities to record, through written field notes and audio/video taping, the social interactions of participants.

2. **Classrooms can be profitably viewed as coherent communities with locally developed symbolic systems, norms, and values.** This principle requires studying classroom teaching and learning as communal constructions of all the participants rather than focusing exclusively on the teacher (Green, Weade, & Graham, 1988; Allwright, 1984).

3. **The social world is constructed through the material realization of symbols which are interpretable to members of the local community.** The behavior of students and the instructor in the course reflects norms and values of individuals and the class community. Capturing this

behavior (and these artifacts) is the first step in the research process.

4. **The meaning of any utterance or behavior is embedded in the community's histories, discourse, and extra-verbal context.** While the recording of the behavior of participants in a research site is the first step in this research, it is essential that the meanings they construct through these behaviors be understood. Further, meaning emerges out of social context and can be understood only through a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of context.

5. **The aim of an ethnographic study is to provide an ecological description and analysis of a community.** In order to understand any type of social interaction within a community (such as the Methods class), it is necessary to comprehend both the "macro" social structures which undergird the interactions (e.g., institutional and political structures) and the "micro" structures of a particular group (e.g., personal and group histories). It is this quest for a holistic perspective which is essential for the scope of my research questions.

6. **Both etic and emic data are essential for understanding a social setting.** Participants in a community provide crucial insights into the behavior and meaning making of their own group. Researchers, with their theoretical and methodological apparatus, can provide alternative perspectives of a community. In addition,

participants can help to evaluate the accuracy of descriptions and analyses created by the researcher.

These ethnographic principles carve out a broad research space for this research project. In particular, ethnographers' emphasis on understanding the participants' point of view is crucial. The holistic perspective of ethnography affords the opportunity to explore questions of how the small groups in the classroom are embedded in the larger class structure and how the course as a whole is part of the departmental program. Finally, this perspective allows for the exploration of ways in which the course is a part of the larger discourse world of teacher education and society's orientation toward issues of language, communication, and voice.

The following is a brief discussion of a set of orienting concepts that have guided this research: social interaction, discourse, meaning making, and norms.

Social Interaction. The focus of this research is on face-to-face social interaction. Moerman (1988) argues that

> face-to-face interaction is the constitutive substrate of social phenomena. Everything that matters socially--meanings, class, roles, emotions, guilt, aggression, and so forth and so on--is socially constructed. Theories about how such things are learned and experienced, and about how to study them, which are not built to the specifications that interaction requires are wrong. (p. 1)

Our social world is constructed solely from material reality (e.g., words, gestures, props). Because we do not have direct access to others' mental states, all aspects of our social life are realized through this material world. A

crucial function of research is to capture that material world and then make sense of it. A primary focus of my data-gathering has been on the discourse of one of the small groups within the course.

Discourse. Discourse analysis is the study of language in use and has as its focus either oral or written texts (Stubbs, 1983; Brown & Yule, 1983). The analysis of discourse assumes stances on the nature of both communication and context (Schiffrin, 1987).

Following Schiffrin (1987), I am assuming that language always occurs in a context and is context sensitive.

> I assume that language always occurs in some kind of context, including cognitive contexts in which past experience and knowledge is stored and drawn upon, cultural contexts, consisting of shared meanings and world views, and social contexts through which both self and other draw upon the institutional and interactional orders to construct definitions of situation and action. (p. 4).

Further, language is sensitive to the contexts in which it is found. That is, the form of the language found in a particular context--it's phonology, vocabulary, grammar--are shaped by these contextual components. Again, I turn to Schiffrin (1987):

> I assume that language is potentially sensitive to all of the contexts in which it occurs, and even more strongly, that language **reflects** those contexts because it helps to constitute them. (p. 5, emphasis in original).

Two points are worth emphasizing here. First, that the discourse found in a particular site has the context embedded in its very core. For researchers, this suggests that a careful study of discourse is prime data for the

discovery of local context. Second, that discourse is not limited to merely reflecting the nature of contexts but, as Schiffrin suggests, "helps to constitute them." That is, discourse can be an important part of the context of a social scene and yet be so sensitive to that local context that salient features of that social scene are indelibly imprinted into its structure. I hasten to add that analysis of social interaction, context, and language need not be limited to transcripts of discourse and can greatly benefit from additional sources of data used in ethnographic research (e.g., participant observation and interviews) (Moerman, 1988).

Schiffrin (1987) adds two additional ideas fundamental to discourse analysis. The first is that "language is always communicative" (p. 5), in the sense that information is "given" (signaled and received) or "given off," that is, interpreted for its meaning without reference to the intention of the speaker (Goffman, 1959). Hence, the local meaning or meanings of a given discourse are the focus of discourse analysis. The second idea is that "language is designed to reflect its communicative basis" (p. 6); for example, the vast amount of "redundancy" found in language is a design feature which aids comprehension (Slobin, 1975), and phonological features of discourse may be designed to signal group membership (Labov, 1972). Consistent with this view of discourse is a view of meaning making as both a cognitive and social phenomenon.

Meaning Making. Meaning is often thought of as a purely cognitive phenomenon in which ideas are transferred from one mind to another through a symbolic system. George Miller referred to this as the "post office" model, in which communication is "accomplished by wrapping an idea in words and sending it off to the other person, who unwraps the words and discovers the idea" (quoted in Pearce, 1989, p. 19). This view of the nature of communication is not adequate. As suggested by Lemke (1989), information is not transferred from one mind to the next via a symbolic system, but rather hearers/readers construct their own meanings (which are themselves social products). Often, the relationship between the speaker's meaning and the hearer's interpretation is problematic. The interpretation that we derive from an utterance is both an individuated cognitive process and a social product. It is cognitive in the sense that individuals analyze utterances for layers of propositional, illocutionary, affective, and other meanings, and this information is stored in memory. In addition, there are cognitive constraints on the amount and types of symbolic information we can process (Clark & Clark, 1977).

However, meaning making is also a profoundly social process and is the primary focus of this research. The symbolic technology we use in language (e.g., vocabulary) is a social product. Crucial aspects of the world are divided differently by different languages and social systems. Since we learn these systems from interacting with our

social environment many of the fundamental components of language must also be social (Volosonov & Bahktin, 1929/1983). The contexts in which language is embedded are crucial to meaning making and these contexts are jointly constructed through interaction.

I have no interest in generating a research agenda which attempts to somehow compare the thoughts in one person's head with the thoughts in another's in order to understand to what degree they are the same or dissimilar. I know of no research methodology for doing this and even if I did, it would not satisfy my research requirements. I am interested in understanding the material processes and social contexts through which meaning is jointly constructed. Therefore, in order to understand these processes, I need to have access to the same material environment in which the participants interact. Because I want to understand the system of communication which the participants use to jointly construct meaning, I am interested in investigating the practices they use to accomplish this.

Norms. A central component of this research project was the identification of norms operating within one of the small groups in the class. "Normative rules involve abstractions of conduct deemed proper in identifiable contexts" (Carbaugh, 1990, p. 141). Carbaugh suggests that normative rules can be stated thus: "In context C, if X one should/not do Y" (p. 142). In other words, in a particular

context, if a particular act transpires, an actor in that context should do (or not do) a subsequent act. For example, in a small group in the Methods course (the context), if a member of the group is (noticeably) silent, group members should structure a turn of talk for him/her.

It is important that norms not be seen as controlling every instance of a given behavior, but rather that they be viewed as statements of appropriateness and standards for evaluation of behavior. In addition, they guide future actions of social actors in particular contexts.

Data Collection and Analysis

Research questions and theoretical frames provide ways to conceptualize the nature of the data needed for a research project. In this research, the primary site of data collection was one of the small collaborative groups. I was a participant observer in the group, with the role of facilitator. This provided me with firsthand knowledge of the group, which I recorded in field notes. I also audio-recorded and transcribed ten group meetings (approximately 15 hours of meetings) over the course of two months.

As group facilitator, I was a dialogue journal partner with each of the group members and used the journals as important sources of insights into group members' experiences with collaborative work and a host of issues raised about course content and process. In addition, I video-recorded the group's presentation and nine other

whole-class sessions (e.g., sessions led by course instructor, sessions led by local public school educators, and student presentations).

I interviewed all the members of the small group I facilitated at least once and also interviewed many other members of the class (both formally and informally). I had access to a wide range of documents within the course, including hand-outs from the instructor (e.g., syllabus and "feedback" on student presentations), hand-outs produced by small groups for their presentations, all internal documents produced within the small group I observed, class evaluations, and final papers of class members.

The first step in research is the capture of a fluid and dynamic social scene. The second step is the transformation of what has been captured into a form in which it will hold still for careful examination. In this research, the primary mechanism for capturing the dialogue of the small groups was through audiotaping. Transcription of the audiotapes would complete the transformative process of rendering social action inert. While a transcript is a severely edited version of the original social scene, it is nevertheless a powerful tool research tool.

I used transcripts of group talk to identify a set of communal norms present in the collaborative dialogue of the group by tracking patterns of talk across meetings (and journal entries). I also used these tapes and field notes to write the story of one of the small groups as its members

struggled collaboratively to complete their group tasks (see chapter 3). Across these group meetings, I also tracked the group's attempts to come to a communal understanding of one central issue within the group ("What is content?") in order to better understand how they went about their group work. I used interviews and readings of research reports by course participants to verify my accounts.

I developed a theoretical framework for researching voice in the course of this research (see chapter 4). I began with a rough theoretical orientation toward voice as being jointly produced among social actors (cf. McDermott, 1988) and used the analysis of transcripts and further readings (e.g., Gergen, 1989) to develop a fuller conception of voice. This in turn provided a useful analytic tool for further analysis of the transcripts.

I selected a <u>critical incident</u> within the small group as a warrant to do a micro-analysis of one small group meeting. Using the SPEAKING paradigm of Hymes (1974) to identify two speech events within the same meeting, I was able to apply the voice framework. This analysis became an important part of this research report (see chapter 5).

Interviews with small group participants (along with their journal entries) were an important way for them to evaluate, reflect upon, and critique the course from their own point of view. I used their comments when I returned to my data sources and attempted to make sense of the course through their eyes. I was particularly intrigued by the

experiences of Sachi, a Japanese member of the class, and used interviews and analysis of her participation in her small group to gain insights into the nature of voice and collaboration from a cross-cultural perspective (see chapter 6). In this sense, I attempted to take the views of participants seriously as a point for analytic concern.

Conclusion

I have used this introductory chapter to orient readers to a set of broad issues in second language teaching and teacher education. As with other parts of this research, my interests in these issues were formed both by my experiences leading up to this research and as a result of it. My interests in collaborative learning and dialogic forms of education led me to this Methods course. In turn, my research in this course and my work with Jerri Willett and other course participants have led me to new understandings (and questions) about this form of teacher education.

This chapter has introduced the questions and research perspective which have guided my exploration of the Methods course. The ethnographic research approach used in this project has proven to be a useful tool for generating both "local theory" which can provide useful information for participants of the Methods course itself and "general theory" (i.e., voice framework) which can be used by researchers in other settings (Elden & Levin, 1991).

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO A WHOLE LANGUAGE METHODS COURSE

> Adult education should have as one of its main tasks to invite people to believe in themselves. It should invite people to believe that they have knowledge.
>
> Paulo Freire (1973)

Introduction

Field Notes 9/5/91: Students individually wander into class on the first night of this new term. It's warm and humid enough to make the students listless, slumped in chairs, with little talk or eye contact. A multicultural collection of strangers from Asia and Europe as well as the United States has come together to study second language teaching.... After class I checked the index cards they filled out this evening and discovered widely diverse backgrounds: Experienced and inexperienced teachers, students taking their last semester of course work for their master's degree, students taking their first course, ESL and EFL teachers, music teachers, English teachers, a teacher of Japanese, students who aren't sure they really want to teach, teachers of elementary, secondary, and adult students, students from China, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, Germany, the Caribbean, the U.S....

How could one Methods class possibly hope to address the fantastic range of levels, interests, and teaching contexts of this diverse group? Educational researchers are increasingly interested in the realities of teaching and learning in particular classrooms embedded in particular institutional and cultural contexts (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). We have come to realize that, like politics, all education is local.

Teacher educators are well aware of the importance of "context" in second language teaching and learning. Hence, we are confronted with a paradox: How do we acknowledge the situated nature of teaching (and learning) while preparing teachers in education programs which are often far removed from their teaching contexts? A widely accepted answer to this question is to orient our students to universals of second language learning.

However, as Becker (1988) has noted about the study of language, "Those things which wash out at higher levels of generality are just the things we need and just the things we can't afford to wash out" (p. 28). For teachers, the particular realities of their students and schools cannot be simply washed out in the study of universals of language acquisition or methods.

This is a report of an ethnographic study of a Methods course for ESL/Bilingual teachers. The instructor, Jerri Willett, is doubly challenged: She must not only attempt to structure a successful learning environment for the multicultural and multilevel group described in the field notes above (a challenge in itself!) but also to educate them for the multitude of teaching contexts in which they will work. In other words, she must confront the paradox. How the instructor and her students went about this task is a primary concern of this research report.

The primary purposes of this chapter are to introduce the Methods course in sufficient detail to contextualize the

subsequent research chapters and to ground its organization in the educational literature. I begin with a brief overview of the central organizational features of the Methods course and its primary goals. Next, I explore the educational research and theory which underly this course structure, with a review of the literatures of Whole Language, task-based learning, and cooperative learning. I then situate the collaborative small groups, which are my primary research interest, within the course structure. Finally, I introduce the central norms for this course with an analysis of the instructor's first two classes and her design of the small group tasks.

The Methods Course:

An Overview of a Whole Language Class

I have conducted ethnographic research in a graduate level Methods and Materials class for ESL/Bilingual Teachers (henceforth, Methods class) at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. The class is taught by Professor Jerri Willett and is composed of 33 students, with a third of the class being international students, predominantly from Asian countries. The class is largely female, with only six males. As suggested in my field notes quoted above, the students come to this class with a diverse set of experiences in teaching and learning second languages, formal education in teaching, and career interests.

The Methods course is taught within the Cultural Diversity and Curriculum Reform division of the School of Education. This program offers a master's degree in teaching ESL and public school certification in Massachusetts. The core courses in ESL are taught by Jerri Willett and include second language acquisition, linguistics, and theories of communication, in addition to the Methods course. The program is not structured around a particular sequence of courses but rather designed to accommodate the complex lives of students in the program, many of whom are part-time students and full-time teachers.

Hence, students may take the Methods course at any time in their own course of study in this program. However, it functions as an entry-level ESL course for many of the students in the program, as the instructor encourages students to take this course early in their studies.

Course Structure

The instructor listed in her course syllabus four primary objectives for this course:

1. Develop a Whole Language framework for conceptualizing teaching in a second language classroom;

2. Survey current TESOL methods, techniques, and materials;

3. Share local resources for teaching ideas and materials;

4. Experience a student-centered, interactive, and cooperative classroom.

The course is organized around a "task-based" approach to course content in which over half the course topics are presented by students (Candlin, 1987). Students are divided into six small groups (four to six students each) and given the task of researching a particular topic in second language teaching and planning and executing a 90-minute presentation in which they teach their classmates about their group's topic. Table 1 (p. 40) provides a summary of topics covered in the course and who was responsible for teaching them.

Course content was organized around the approaches, techniques, and materials used in second language classrooms as well as an exploration of students' own experiences of learning within a Whole Language course. Whole Language provides a conceptual frame within which diverse educational topics are examined. While a Whole Language approach is not typically found in second language methods courses, within TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), there is nascent interest in its principles and it is compatible with many of the concepts of various communicative approaches currently in use within the field. The language teaching content shown in Table 1 was selected by the instructor to familiarize students with current approaches to language instruction which are consistent with Whole Language principles. The experiential components of the course permeate all phases of the class but are centered within the small groups.

Table 1

Presentation Schedule

Class no. Date	Content	Presenters
1. 9/5	Introduction to organization of the course	Jerri Willett
2. 9/12	Cooperative Learning	Jerri Willett
3. 9/19	Natural Approach	Jerri Willett
4. 9/26	Whole Language	Jerri Willett
5. 10/3	Reading & Writing with Elementary ESL Students	Two teachers from local schools
6. 10/10	Problem Posing (Wallerstein, 1983)	Problem Posing Group
7. 10/17	Simulations (Jones, 1982)	Simulation Group
8. 10/24	Beginning ESL Literacy (Heald-Taylor, 1989; Hudelson, 1989)	Reading & Writing Group
9. 10/31	Content-Area Teaching (Mohan, 1986)	Content Group
10. 11/7	Responding to Writing: Part I (Spear, 1988)	Writing Response Group
11. 11/14	Literature & ESL (Collie & Slater, 1988)	Literature Group
12. 11/21	No Class: Graduate employee strike	
13. 12/5	Responding to Writing: Part II (Spear, 1988)	Writing Response Group
14. 12/14	Facilitation	Facilitators' Group

The small groups met for the first hour of each class in order to collaboratively research a group topic (e.g., problem posing, simulations, literature) and plan for their presentations. On the first night of class, students chose the topic they were most interested in researching from a list created by the instructor. Each small group was assigned a "facilitator" who supported the group in their efforts to work collaboratively.

A key component of this course was the decision by the instructor to use an experiential approach to teacher education so that authentic problems in teaching and learning in a multicultural Whole Language classroom would be encountered within the context of the Methods course. In other words, students would not only study Whole Language approaches to teaching a second language but would also have opportunities to grapple with the complexities of teaching and learning in a Whole Language class. For example, students had opportunities to learn about the use of dialogue journals in second language classes and to experience writing a dialogue journal. Students both learned about collaborative learning in an ESL class and participated in a course organized around collaborative learning.

While students would have opportunities to explore and reflect on their own particular teaching contexts through observations of local ESL classes and their final course paper, a major source of learning would be the communal

knowledge created within the class. Students were responsible for teaching one another much of the course content through the presentations (see Table 1). A major source of learning would be located in the small groups in which students experienced for themselves the challenges and rewards of peer collaborative learning. A primary focus of this research is to analyze this form of instructional discourse in order to understand its structure and function and the multiple tensions or problematics which it fosters.

The instructor's response to the questions posed in the introduction--how to teach such a diverse set of students and how to prepare these students for teaching in their own contexts--was to create a local context, common to all the course participants, in which the complexities of teaching and learning could be explored communally. The instructor treated the diversity of students as a resource for learning rather than an impediment. By organizing the class around collaborative dialogue in small groups, she was able to use the heterogeneity of the group to facilitate the exploration of diverse views on learning and teaching.

The instructor also acknowledged both the critical role that context plays in second language pedagogy and the impossibility of adequately treating the vast range of potential teaching sites encompassed within the class. While acknowledging the impossibility of tailoring her course to the diverse teaching contexts in which these students would be (or were) teaching, she structured the

teacher education classroom as its own legitimate site for understanding Whole Language principles sufficiently to enable students to ultimately adapt what they found useful to their own teaching contexts. However, students had opportunities to explore issues directly related to their own particular teaching contexts both within their small groups and in their final course paper.

From this brief overview of the course structure, I now turn to a review of the theoretical and research literature in education which underlies this course structure. My intent in this section will be to directly tie this literature to the structure of the course. Hence, I will tack back and forth between the discussion of the academic literature and a description of the Methods course.

Whole Language

The Methods course is framed by the instructor as a Whole Language course. Whole Language is not a teaching technique or method, but rather a "professional theory in practice" about teaching and learning (Edelsky et al., 1991). It began in the field of literacy education with elementary-age children and has spread to other educational sites (Goodman et al., 1991) including second language teaching (Rigg, 1991; Freeman & Freeman, 1992) and, judging from this course, to graduate education.

Whole Language theory contends that students are best served by an education that accounts for at least three

ideas: (1) that the context for learning should take advantage of people's propensity to do/think/know more when they are part of learning communities; (2) that planning for learning and teaching has to account for the social relationships in which the learning and teaching will be embedded; and (3) that what is learned should have some sensible and imminent connection to what it is learned for (Edelsky et al., 1991, p. 24).

The Methods course puts the three ideas outlined above into practice: (1) It creates communities of learners through the collaborative dialogue surrounding small group meetings and course presentations; (2) it provides support for students to create the kinds of relationships which will foster a rich learning experience among peers by introducing collaborative norms, creating a peer learning task, and providing facilitators for each small group; and (3) it structures tasks so that students are able to choose topics that most interest them and have the freedom to connect these topics to their own lives, experiences, and future plans.

This approach connects education to both the social world and individual experiences of it. Learning is viewed as a social act as it is through interactions with others that learners acquire the communal concepts, norms, values, practices, and symbols of their society (Gee, 1990). Learners internalize these social components and use them to make sense of the world (Vygotsky, 1978). Hence, communal learning is an important source for learners to acquire and practice these social components. Individual learners

approach this process of learning in diverse ways, based upon their own backgrounds (i.e., class, sex, cultural group(s), native language(s), educational experiences, personal histories) and, crucially, upon their own goals, agendas, and imagined futures.

Knowledge and Language in Whole Language

The following are the central premises of Whole Language (modified from Rigg, 1991):

1. **"Knowledge is socially constructed, rather than received or discovered"** (p. 523, emphasis added). From a Whole Language perspective, knowledge is embedded in both historical and social contexts. Further, knowledge cannot be transferred from a teacher's (or author's) head directly to students' minds via oral (or written) texts. Rather, students must "construct" their own understandings of school subjects, textbooks, etc., through intersubjective meanings which are socially available (Vygotsky, 1978; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Bruner, 1987). This premise highlights the need for collaboration between teacher and student and among students.

2. **"The major purpose of language is the creation and communication of meaning"** (p. 523, emphasis added). Language is the major way that we create meaning. We use this meaning-making potential of language to both communicate with others and to think. In the classroom, language must be "authentic," in the sense that it must be

capable of being used by learners to communicate and/or create "real" meanings. For example, writing assignments should be geared to encourage students to write for an audience that actually needs the information or for themselves (e.g., presentations for classmates in Methods class).

3. **"Language is both individual and social"** (p. 525, emphasis added). Because of the nearly infinite variety of experiences people can have, each person constructs his/her own individual idiolect. Factors such as class, gender, education, jobs, and nationality or region, and myriad personal experiences shape the language(s) which we use. However, language is always social, in that it marks and creates particular social relationships (doctor/patient; teacher/student; foreman/worker). What is the purpose of a conversation? What are the participants relationship(s)? What is the situation or context in which the conversation is taking place (and creating)? These questions are relevant for all forms of communication. In a Whole Language classroom in the United States, teachers are sensitive to (and accept) the languages and varieties of English spoken by their individual students. Further, social relations and context are highlighted (rather than ignored) in all aspects of language study.

4. **"Part of the wholeness of whole language is the inclusion of literacy as a part of language"** (p. 525, emphasis added). In literate societies, "natural" language

use and development include reading and writing. Therefore, literacy skills are taught right along with oral language skills in language classrooms. The artificial division of reading, writing, speaking, and listening are avoided, since the four language modes are "mutually supportive."

5. **"Language is a supersystem composed of interdependent, inseparable subsystems"** (Edelsky et al, 1991, p. 11). All the subsystems of language (e.g., phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) are operating in all instances of real language use. In breaking language into its components in order to study it, we strip away information we require to make it meaningful. Meaning requires the whole of language (i.e., all its subsystems and social context) to be present for us to successfully assign meaning to it--in essence, for it to be language at all. Hence, language instruction focuses on the meaningful "whole," and subsequently moves to the study of the "part" (Wilkins, 1976).

Each of the topics in second language instruction studied in the Methods course is consistent with the basic Whole Language principles of language and knowledge.

Whole Language Principles of Teaching and Learning

In this section, I describe the key assumptions Whole Language educators make about teaching and learning:

1. **"Learning proceeds from whole to part"** (Freeman & Freeman, 1992, p. 7, emphasis added). Students need an

opportunity to understand the "big picture" before studying its subcomponents. In terms of language study, this follows directly from viewing language as a "supersystem" with inseparable subsystems. Freeman and Freeman suggest three reasons why whole to part learning is important:

> First ... it is hard to understand the individual parts outside the context of the whole. Second, the whole is more than the sum of the parts, so even if we know all the parts ... we may still not understand the whole. Third, and most important, if we give students only the parts, they may decide they are not much interested in them because they really don't know what the whole might be like. (p. 17)

This approach flies in the face of a North American cultural pattern of teaching from part to whole.[2]

2. **"Lessons should be learner centered because learning is the active construction of knowledge by the student"** (Freeman & Freeman, p. 7). It is critical to start lessons with what students know and to use activities students are interested in to help them construct their own knowledge of a particular topic (Freeman & Freeman). It is the interweaving of new schooled information with concepts of everyday life which marks the creation of academic knowledge (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

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2. This ubiquitous form of Western educational process--part to whole--can be seen in a vast range of teaching situations, e.g., phonics approach to reading instruction, ballet training, and ESL grammar classes. In each of these examples, micro-skills are introduced by a teacher, practiced by students, and then (eventually) "synthesized" into the target goal (e.g., reading test questions, dancing Swan Lake, getting a 500 TOEFL score). See Wilkins (1977) for a detailed discussion of this process in second language instruction.

3. **"Lessons should have meaning and purpose for students <u>now</u>"** (Freeman & Freeman, p. 8, emphasis added). It is important that students believe that what they are doing is meaningful in their present lives (rather than many years down the road). Lessons that are integrated with students' own lives are both easier for them to make sense of and motivate them to "take risks" and engage in the topic (Freeman & Freeman). An important part of Whole Language is accepting and respecting students as <u>whole people</u> with their own languages, cultures, personal goals, and experiences (Rigg, 1991).

As suggested in the course overview above, the Methods course was designed by the instructor to build upon these Whole Language principles of language, knowledge, teaching and learning. Within the Methods course, students study a variety of approaches to and issues in second language teaching and learning which are compatible with these principles. The course is also designed to give students an opportunity to directly experience a Whole Language class as students.

<u>Political Agenda</u>

Whole Language is more than just a theory of instruction and learning; it has a <u>political</u> agenda as well. Advocates of Whole Language believe in "empowering" teachers to shape their own curricula with the students in their classrooms (Rich, 1985). Rather than relying on "experts"

(who do not actually teach) such as school administrators, academics, researchers, and book publishers, Whole Language provides a framework for teachers to view themselves as the "experts" within their own classrooms.

> Whole language teaching, in its best sense, can be seen as a political activity since a true whole language notion returns power where it belongs--to the children and teacher in the classroom. Whole language is radical in that it assumes that everyone is a learner and everyone can become an expert. (Rich, 1985, p. 722)

ESL teachers often work under difficult circumstances, with little money, job security, or professional status. The field of TESOL has only recently entered into public schools and universities and teachers are often forced to work on the margins (Willett & Jeannot, 1993). The 1991 version of the Methods course contained a (largely implicit) empowerment education philosophy (Aronwitz & Giroux, 1991; Freire, 1973). The instructor used the course to orient students toward a critical stance toward institutional relationships within the education field: language teacher/language student, theoretician-researcher/ practitioner, and professor/graduate student.

In other words, the course she designed challenged students' fundamental assumptions about the roles of teachers and students in a classroom and about the role of experts, researchers, and academics in teacher education. By constructing the course around collaborative dialogue and teaching among students and muting her own professorial voice, she made the course a site for a critical exploration of the roles of teacher and students in the creation of

knowledge and the creation of new roles for students which attempts to position them as experts and teachers. In this way, the course attempts to not simply prepare teachers to fit into schools, but rather to help them acquire a perspective that challenges a set of fundamental assumptions on which schooling rests (cf. Beyer, 1988).

The emphasis within the course was on a "community of learners" becoming "experts" on a variety of topics related to second language teaching. Further, the students were encouraged to, in the words of the course instructor, "problem solve" in their classrooms, rather than following the "recipes" of experts.

Tasks in the Methods Course

The small group work in the Methods course is organized by the instructor to be task-based. That is, the class process centers around students working on a project or task which has the following two features: (1) Learners are involved in communal class work in which they have input into what is to be learned and how it is to be learned (Candlin, 1987). (2) The task structure allows for multiple answers, diverse student approaches, skills, and behavior (Cohen, 1986). A key ingredient in task-based approaches to education is the involvement of students in deciding what they will study and how they will learn. The task should be one that is open-ended in terms of the final answer or product that is created by students.

In the Methods course, students selected a group topic that they were most interested in from a menu created by the instructor (see Table 1). Within this topic, group members had great freedom to decide what exactly they would focus on and how they wanted to research their topic and do their presentation. It is precisely this freedom that is designed to make the presentation task authentic and the course empowering. This is also consistent with the Whole Language principles that learning should be relevant and intrinsically interesting to the learner and respect the learners needs, goals, and experiences.

Multiple Roles

An important consequence of task-based education is the reconfiguration of social relations within a class (Bossert, 1979). In the course of enacting the "presentation task," group members in the Methods course take on multiple roles: as a member of a collaborative group, as a journal partner with the group's facilitator, or as a teacher to classmates--planning the lesson, assigning readings to the class, and conducting a 90-minute lesson on their group topic. The range of roles that students take on in this course is one of its defining features and something that sets it apart from most other types of graduate courses.

The role of the teacher is also dramatically altered. Most of the course content is taught not by the instructor but by the students. Further, much of the course is enacted

in the small groups out of the hearing of the instructor. She has noted that one of the consequences of this form of education is that her voice in muted within the course as a whole and particularly in the small groups. In other words, relative to other teaching contexts, her ability to persuade students on a host of educational issues through face-to-face interaction is severally limited.

One of the issues investigated in this research project is the effect this re-configuration of roles has on the enactment of the course. For example, I investigated the consequences of muting the voice of the instructor within the class process.

Second Language Teaching

Task-based curricula are increasingly advocated by language educators as a way to involve students in communicative activities in which they can use the target language to accomplish a communal goal (Nunan, 1992; Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Prahbu, 1987). Hence, the use of tasks in the Methods course is designed, in part, to provide students with the experience of learning in this style of education so that they can develop their own ideas on using it in their own language classrooms. The following is a list of the primary tasks enacted in the Methods course:

1. Collaborative small group task: Research group topic, plan presentation, select reading materials, and teach lesson.

2. Write dialogue journal with small group facilitator.

3. Write feedback for one small group presentation.

4. Attend a professional conference and write short paper.

5. Write an individual paper on a lesson plan suitable for a second language class.

The central task for the course is the collaborative group task which is discussed in more detail below. It is also the primary focus of this research. This task asks students to meet in small groups to research a particular topic in second language teaching and then to teach their fellow classmates about their topic. The second task, writing a dialogue journal, gives students an opportunity to discuss issues of group process which arise in their own small groups with their group facilitator. These exchanges are often reported by students to be interesting and useful support for reflecting on the collaborative small group experience (Costello, 1992).

Students are also asked to provide "feedback" about a presentation by classmates once during the term. The instructor also requires students to attend a professional conference and write a short paper on what they learned. The final course paper is a lesson plan which they would like to use in a second language classroom. Many of these final papers develop directly out of the topics that students work on in their own small groups. Each of these tasks, although required by the instructor, allows students great freedom in deciding what they want to focus on and how they want to go about producing a final product. Finally, each of these tasks is meant to provide students with an

experience which is relevant for developing the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful teaching career.

Collaborative Learning

The collaborative small group learning plays a central role in the educational process of the Methods course. Many students, when they first encounter this course, are astonished to find that a graduate course would gather together a group of strangers with widely diverse backgrounds, cultures, and educational interests around a topic they know very little about and then ask the group to be responsible for teaching that content to their classmates. In order to better understand the theoretical and research base undergirding this course structure, I have posed the following two questions:

1. Why have students meet in small groups to learn?
2. Why use neophytes to teach graduate level subject matter?

In order to better understand the foundation of this course, we first need to examine "cooperative learning."

Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning

Learning which involves face-to-face interaction between or among two or more people is perhaps the most common way to learn. A common scene for such learning is a accomplished practioner of some skill working with a less skilled person: a father reading with his child, a cook

preparing a meal with the help of a person wanting to learn how to cook, an experienced carpenter building some structure with a helper, etc. In each of these situation, a neophyte is learning about a subject (e.g., books or foods) and how to do something (e.g., read or cook) by working in a productive activity with a more experienced person (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In schools, cooperative learning typically involves students working together in small groups or pairs with only intermittent contact with a teacher. The research on cooperative learning in schools is extensive and dates back nearly one hundred years (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). One of the fundamental questions which has been investigated is this: Does cooperative learning enhance student learning compared with more competitive or individualistic incentive and task structures?

In a meta-analysis of 323 cooperative learning studies, Johnson and Johnson (1990) report:

> When all of the studies are included in the analysis, the average cooperator performed at about two-thirds of a standard deviation above the average competitors (effect size = 0.67) and three-quarters of a standard deviation above the average person working within an individualistic situation (effect size = 0.75). (p. 24)

A partial answer to the question posed above--Why have students learn in small groups?--is that there is evidence that this is an effective means of education.

However, simply putting students into groups does <u>not</u> guarantee superior learning. Johnson and Johnson argue that there are five conditions under which "group efforts may be

expected to be more productive than individual efforts."

They are:

1. Clearly perceived positive interdependence.
2. Considerable promotive (face-to-face) interaction.
3. Felt personal responsibility (individual accountability) to achieve the group's goals.
4. Frequent use of relevant interpersonal and small-group skills.
5. Periodic and regular group processing. (p. 27)

The first condition, "positive interdependence," "exists when one perceives that one is linked with others in a way so that one cannot succeed unless they do (and vice versa) and/or that one must coordinate one's efforts with the efforts of others to complete a task" (Johnson & Johnson, p. 27). The second condition of face-to-face interaction focuses attention on the process of cooperating "as individuals encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts and goals to complete tasks and achieve in order to reach the group's goals" (p. 30). This can be achieved by students providing assistance, exchanging information or materials, providing feedback to one another, challenging the conclusions of group members, acting in trusting and trustworthy ways, and so on. This condition is explored in detail in this research project.

The third condition, personal responsibility, refers to a group member's willingness to complete his/her share of the task and to help other group members complete their share of the work. This component, which Slavin (1983)

believes to be a key to successful cooperative learning, can be maintained by the course instructor by putting in place evaluative mechanisms for monitoring individual work and learning. As Slavin argues, the successful completion of a group project is not an indication of the learning which has taken place for individual students.

The fourth condition, the use of interpersonal skills, focuses on the communication skills of group members. Like most learning structures in schools, cooperative group learning approaches the process of creation of knowledge through language. Group members must be able to use small group communicative skills such as task related skills (e.g., asking for clarification and explanations, explaining ideas or concepts) and group-related social skills (e.g., acknowledging others contributions, praising others, keeping the group on task). The organization of the educational site to promote this type of social interaction is one of the keys to successful group work (Cohen, 1986). Again, this aspect of small group learning is explored in detail in this research.

The final condition for successful cooperative group learning is group processing.

> Group processing may be defined as a dialogue focused on the group reflecting on a group session to (a) describe what member actions were helpful and unhelpful and (b) make decisions about what actions to continue or change (Johnson & Johnson, 1990, p. 32).

These processing sessions can be structured to allow group members to discuss how well their group is functioning

and/or to provide feedback on the group from an outside observer such as the course teacher or, in the Methods course, a facilitator.

How Cooperative Learning Works. While there is a great deal of evidence that cooperative learning, designed properly, can increase learning for low, middle, and high achieving students, the precise causal mechanisms for this improvement are less well understood (Slavin, 1993). Motivation is widely believed to play an important role in increased student achievement (Sharan & Shaulov, 1990; Slavin, 1983). Sharan and Shaulov report on a study of 17 sixth-grade classrooms in Israel whose students studied arithmetic, the Bible, and Hebrew language and literature. Cooperative learning was shown to increase the motivation of these students:[3]

> We consider two sets of variables to be central in explaining the superior motivating effects of cooperative learning, namely: positive social facilitation and peer acceptance in small cooperative groups, and enhanced pupil involvement in decision making regarding one's work. (p. 173)

Another component of cooperative learning which is hypothesized to be an important part of the learning process is the interactions which take place among peers. In Webb's (1985) review of research on peer interaction in small group learning, there were mixed results as to the role peer

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3. Motivation was defined by Sharan and Shaulov (1990) behavorially as "(a) perseverance in carrying out the learning task, (b) involvement in classroom learning, and (c) willingness to invest effort in preparing homework" (p. 177).

interaction played in student achievement. She identified "giving explanations" and "receiving explanations" as tending to be beneficial for student achievement. However, at the time of the review, few studies had been conducted, and those were one- to three-week investigations of junior high or high school students studying mathematics. The modest claims made in these studies are further weakened by the linguistically naive manner in which data were gathered. In two of the studies, notes were taken by investigators based on predetermined categories (e.g., giving help, asking questions) in one-minute blocks of time. The remaining three studies used audio recording and coded interactions from transcripts.

Webb noted the limitations of observational systems which did not take into account the difficulties of reliably capturing and coding behavior as the interaction unfolds and the importance of capturing "sequences of interactions" among students. I would simply add that what constitutes "giving help" (or any similar category) cannot be determined without understanding the local communicative system and meanings which are created by the actual group members themselves.

Wells et al. (1990) take a rather different approach in a Canadian study of four schools involving 72 children in Grade Four. Gathering data from extensive video taping, "learning logs" written by students, and direct observation, the researchers analyze student interactions for evidence of

collaborative interactions. Wells et. al. argue that collaborative learning encourages

> students to discover and pool their expertise, and it is the teacher's adoption of such an emphasis that enables individual learners within the group to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing enquiry.... [T]he mode of interaction is that which is characteristic of talk between young children and their parents about a topic of mutual interest. (pp. 99-100)

The authors take a constructivist approach to learning which emphasizes that knowledge cannot be transmitted directly from "expert" to novice via written texts or oral exposition, but rather that knowledge must be reconstructed by "each individual knower through a process of interpreting or making sense of new information in terms of what he/she already knows" (Wells et al., p. 97; cf. Piaget, 1977; Bruner, 1972).

The authors conclude their report with the thesis of their research:

> People learn most successfully when they have the freedom to make choices about the activities in which they engage and are given support through processes of co-determination of what to learn and how best to do so. At the same time, for all of us--children, teachers, and researchers--the construction of knowledge requires goal-directed engagement with new information through direct experience and exposition, through discussion and deliberation with others, and through communing with oneself in writing and reading. (p. 118)

Their emphasis on active construction of knowledge by learners within "communities of literate thinkers" is consistent with Whole Language principles and with the approach used in the Methods course.

The research cited above points toward two reasons for the enhanced academic performance of students in cooperative learning groups: increased motivation and communal knowledge created through dialogue. However, cooperative learning advocates generally have goals which reach beyond merely the learning of academic content.

Cooperative Learning and Social Skills

In virtually all aspects of our lives, we must be prepared to work cooperatively with others--at home with family members, on the job with fellow employees, and in our apartment complexes or neighborhoods. In education, teachers must be able to work with fellow educators and parents as well as with students. Advocates of cooperative learning argue that cooperative small group learning can help learners acquire the social skills necessary to create and maintain positive social relations with others.

Many educators who have used cooperative learning small groups have done so to improve the social relations among culturally and/or racially diverse classmates (Slavin, 1983).

Similarly, the Methods course is structured around small group learning in order to give students an opportunity to use and improve their cooperative social skills: communal decision making, collaborative dialogue, respecting and learning with and from peers, etc. Further, by emphasizing cooperative peer learning, the marginal

status of some international students and students with less teaching experience, which had been observed in previous classes, can be addressed.

Cooperative Learning in the ESL Classroom

An important reason to use small group learning in the Methods course is to provide students with an opportunity to experience for themselves a popular form of education in ESL classes. The rising interest in the ESL field in communicative approaches to second language learning has generated a number of innovative approaches and materials for structuring classroom interaction around meaningful communication (Acton, 1984) in terms of both "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1981) and "comprehensible output" (Swain, 1985). Cooperative learning is posited as an effective way to increase student opportunities to use a second language in the classroom, as compared to teacher-fronted classes (McGroarty, 1989). This would seem to be a rather natural outcome of cooperative procedures, as students have more opportunities to actually use the language they are studying.

McGroarty cites opportunities for students to use a wide range of communicative skills as particularly important for their development of "communicative competence" in a second language. She argues that small group task-based learning can be an ideal site for that type of interaction to take place.

The importance of having access to a rich source of target language is widely accepted in the field of ESL as being absolutely crucial (Krashen, 1981; Klein, 1986). How would second language students get this input through cooperative learning with peers who are also struggling to learn the target language? In classrooms in which second language students are mixed with fluent speakers of the target language, careful heterogeneous grouping of students can help to ensure that second language students have access to the rich language they need (Cohen, 1986). It is in this context that the interpersonal advantages of cooperative learning can be most beneficial, because as students work together they have a better chance of making friends (Slavin, 1983).[4] Fillmore (1976) has identified forming a close social relationship with a fluent speaker as being a key to acquiring a second language.

Is cooperative learning a viable option for classrooms in which all the students are learning a second language? A study of seventh-grade Israeli students studying English as a foreign language suggests that cooperative learning groups can be a more efficient way to learn English than more traditional whole-class settings, even when all students are learners (Bejarano, 1987).

However, Wong-Fillmore (1985) participated in a three-year study of third and fifth-grade classrooms with

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4. See Towson (1985) for a discussion of the "assimilationist" bias in much research and thought in cooperative learning.

Cantonese- and Spanish-speaking students in schools in the United States. She classified the 19 classrooms into two types of class structures: "teacher-directed" and "open."

> In the first type of structure [teacher-directed], many instructional events are organized as whole-class or large-group activities which are directed by the teacher. In the second type [open], there are fewer teacher-directed activities than individual and group learning activities in which students work cooperatively without much teacher involvement. (p. 24)

The results of the study showed that the open class often produced inferior results for the ESL students.

> Indeed, classes that were open in their structure and those that made heavy use of individual work were among those found to be among the least successful for language learning.... [Open] classes do not work well for anyone at all, however, unless there are sufficient numbers of English-speaking students in the classroom to support the language-learning efforts of the LEP [Limited English Proficiency][5] students who are there. (pp. 24-25)

The conflicting results of these two studies may be explained by differences in social context (i.e., EFL versus ESL, Israel versus United States) or perhaps because the open classrooms described by Wong-Fillmore were not cooperative in the sense described by Johnson & Johnson (1990) above.

Clearly, second language classrooms could be organized with a cooperative learning structure to take advantage of having second language students using the target language and interacting, combined with formats designed to deliver

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5. "LEP" is a label which categorizes children by what they cannot do rather than what they can. Since these children are not "walking deficits" but rather are, in many cases, on their way to being bilingual, I prefer the term "ESL" student.

ample amounts of comprehensible input from fluent speakers (Krashen, 1983; Asher, 1977) and frequent small group contact with an instructor (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

While cooperative learning for second language students needs to be further investigated, interest in it is widespread. The Methods course explores several approaches to second language instruction which are organized around cooperative learning, for example, simulations (Jones, 1982), "integrated curriculum" (Enright & McCloskey, 1988), and "peer response" to writing (Spear, 1988).

Small Group Collaborative Learning in the Methods Course

In the Methods course, collaborative learning is used as the primary organizing structure for class members, who generate much of the course's subject content and provide an important experiential components to the course. These small groups are structured to encompass all of the "conditions" argued by Johnson and Johnson (1990) as being important for productive cooperative learning. Groups are structured to have both positive interdependence and face-to-face interaction. The assignment of the group task (to collaboratively research a topic and teach it to classmates) focuses group members on the necessity of working together and sharing responsibility. As we will see in my investigation of one of the small groups, group members not only spent class time but also met out of class (not a class

requirement) in order to collaboratively create their presentations.

In the Methods course, there is a distinction made between "cooperation" and "collaboration" which is not widely reflected in the research literature. Cooperation refers to a group working together on a task. However, the individual members may wish to divide up the task and parcel out individual tasks which can be done alone. Collaborative learning focuses upon the learners working together on a task. Much of the work of the group is done while together through face-to-face interaction.[6]

Collaborative learning is dependent upon a group working face-to-face with a high degree of interdependence and co-discovery (i.e., learning communally) (Damon & Phelps, 1988). My research suggests that a key component of this process is the interactions by which a group co-constructs a voice for a group member. Other conditions of cooperative learning, as suggested by Johnson and Johnson (1990), are also at work. Individuals demonstrate personal responsibility for creating a good presentation and supporting their group's research and planning. For example, groups often meet outside of class time in order to prepare their presentations. Group members identify with their group through actions taken both in class and outside. As we will see in the research on the Content group,

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6. I would like to thank Diane Sweet for bringing this distinction to my attention in a paper she co-authored for TESOL, 1990 (Willett et al., 1990).

students use (and refine) small group communication skills in myriad ways in order to provide opportunities for all members to participate.

The final condition outlined by Johnson and Johnson (1990), "group processing," was accomplished within the small groups through the role of the facilitator, who was responsible for supporting group members as they struggled to work collaboratively. For example, in the group that I facilitated, I organized one Process meeting to discuss the group discourse structure. That session proved to be pivotal within our group. All small groups discussed these issues at various times--within the group, informally outside the group time, and in the dialogue journals with their facilitators.

The first question posed at the beginning of this section on collaborative learning--Why have students meet in small groups to learn?--has a three-part answer: (1) Cooperative/ collaborative learning has been shown to be an effective way for students to learn subject matter. (2) Cooperative/ collaborative learning has the potential to not only create the conditions for subject knowledge acquisition but also to help students in developing certain social skills (e.g., cooperative behavior) and desirable social outcomes (e.g., promoting friendship and tolerance among ethnic and racial groups). (3) Cooperative/ collaborative learning in the Methods course provided students with an experiential base for understanding both

the structure of collaborative learning and what it is like to be a member of a collaborative group from a student's point of view.

The Instructor's Design: Rationale, Goals, and Task

In order to understand collaborative learning as it is configured in this course you must understand the instructor's views of knowledge and learning. In this course, she attempts to create a class in which knowledge is diffused among group members rather than located in the traditional role of the instructor (and authors). She approaches learning from a "constructivist position" which suggests that learners must create their own meanings and understandings of course content and must be allowed to connect what is being studied to their own lives.

The instructor also believes that teachers need an opportunity to "apprentice" themselves to the discourse of the second language teaching profession (Gee, 1990; Freeman, 1991). They need a chance to discuss, argue, listen, read, tell stories, and teach in order to fully grasp the vocabulary and concepts which are being studied in this course.

Goals for Small Groups

The instructor has multiple goals for the collaborative groups which far exceed the research and presentation of a

particular course topic. She has structured the course tasks so that they will provide opportunities to:

1. Experience collaborative task-based learning in a heterogeneous group
2. Research a current topic in the field of TESOL
3. Provide a forum to construct a professional discourse through dialogue
4. Create a "community of learners"
5. Create student "experts" within the class
6. Plan and teach a class about a group topic in a presentation
7. Experience working with a facilitator (or being a facilitator)
8. Experience writing a dialogue journal.

1. **Experiencing collaborative learning.** The small group learning is designed to be conducted through dialogue among equal-status peers. The groups are selected to be as heterogeneous as possible in terms of teaching backgrounds, formal education, gender, and culture. Students are encouraged to reflect upon their experience with this form of education in order to gain insights into using collaborative learning in their own classrooms.

2. **Researching a TESOL topic.** The group members draw upon texts recommended by the instructor and materials that they obtain from the library, conferences, peers, etc., as well as their own relevant personal experiences, in order to gain a deeper understanding of a current topic in second language teaching. While each of the topics is selected by the instructor, students both choose what topic they want to

research and have considerable freedom in deciding what aspects of this topic to investigate. This provides students with opportunities to learn more about some aspect of second language teaching and gives them the experience of researching a particular field.

3. **Learning professional discourse.** The discussions about the group topic allow group members to use the professional language of the teaching field within the context of an authentic task. Group members have opportunities to "make sense" of some of the concepts used in the professional literature. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the small groups provide a "semiotic space" for group members to discuss, argue, and negotiate understandings. This active use of the language and concepts of the field through collaborative dialogue is an important part of the educational process (Wells et al., 1990; Gee, 1990).

4. **Creating a community of learners.** One of the goals of the small group is that it will become a "community of learners." That is, rather than each student working individually to make sense of the course content, a group is organized to support that process. Further, the acts of discussing, sharing information, clarifying, negotiating meanings, etc., can be beneficial for student learning. Group members are encouraged to work collaboratively with one another, using the diversity of the group as a "resource" to come to understand their group topic and

create the best presentation possible. This experience can be used to access the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of this type of education <u>from the viewpoint of students</u>.

5. **Creating student experts.** An expert is by definition not a "student." However, in this setting students become local "experts" within their topic area, since they have had an opportunity to explore their topic in some depth in their small groups. The class is structured to bring the expertise of students into the foreground and push into the background the traditional experts--authors and teachers.

6. **Teaching peers.** An essential part of the small group task is to actually teach what the group members have learned about their topic to their fellow students. The students' sole responsibility for teaching the class about their topic makes the task an authentic teaching situation, as students wrestle with the full complexities of teaching. This is a powerful motivator for students, fully engaging them in both learning about their group topics and carefully planning their lessons.

7. **Working with a facilitator.** Each group has a facilitator who joins a small group for about half the weekly meetings. (On the alternate weeks, the facilitators meet as a group to discuss issues of facilitation.) They are supposed to provide support to group members by focusing on the "group process," to ensure that all group members have an opportunity to participate, to negotiate conflicts

in the group, and to generally be supportive as the group engages in the task.

Group members have an opportunity to experience what it is like to work with (or as) a facilitator. Facilitators are chosen not because they are "experts" in the group topic but rather because they have expressed interest in exploring the role of facilitator. They are drawn from students enrolled in the course, from doctoral or master's students familiar with the course, and from teachers in local schools. This role is an important one in collaborative learning and this experience provides students with some hands-on experiences with this teaching role.

8. **Writing a dialogue journal.** Dialogue journals are a joint writing forum between the group facilitator and a group member. The purpose is to create a medium for a discussion between the two partners about issues which arise in the course. Topics covered in the journals include discussions of key ideas and concepts within the course, descriptions of student observations in local schools, reflections on the small group experience (e.g., personality conflicts, group process, cross-cultural issues), discussions of presentations, etc. The dialogue journal is one of the supports within the course for this type of learning in that it provides a sympathetic partner (facilitator) who is willing to listen to and talk with group members about the course experience. It is also an

important site of "reflection" on issues raised within the course for many students.

The dialogic nature of the small collaborative groups is fundamental for these multiple goals. The structure of the small groups is heavily guided by the nature of the task that the instructor has devised. It is to this topic that we now turn.

Small Group Task

The task of the small groups structures much of the interactions within the class, as students meet the first hour of class and one group or another teaches over half of the class sessions in the subsequent 90 minutes. In order to better understand the structure of this task, it is useful to review the instructor's guidelines. They are, in fact, an outline of the task.

Guidelines for Workshop Presentations

1. Give a brief overview of the most important issues that are debated in the topic area of your workshop.... Do not worry about the presentation until after you have come to terms with the concepts you want to present....

2. Describe the principles of learning/teaching that have guided your selection and design of activities.... [B]e sure to relate this framework to the developing Whole Language framework we are trying to develop....

3. Provide the class with an opportunity to think about the range of different ideas, techniques, and materials that could be used in teaching the topic area of your workshop....

4. Provide the class with an opportunity to experience, tryout or actively analyze ... some

activity, ideas or techniques related to content-based instruction.

5. Provide an opportunity to discuss and ask questions.

6. Prepare a handout in which you provide a list or bibliography of possible resources in your particular area of concentration and perhaps summarize the <u>most</u> important points.

7. You may not take more than 90 minutes no matter how interesting your presentation may be.

8. Ask yourselves, "How do we know whether they have understood what we are trying to say?" ... You'll need to plan ways of incorporating feedback in the workshop and ways of responding during moment-by-moment interaction.

9. In the past, the best presentations have been collaborative, not merely cooperative. In collaborative presentations, members discuss issues and plans and decide together the nature and shape of the presentation. In cooperative presentations, members divide up the work and coordinate the presentation without any real discussion of the ideas. Only by discussing amongst yourselves, a very diverse group, will you each stretch your own thinking and develop a workshop that is richer than any single person could present on their own (including the professor).

10. Collaborative work is difficult. You will find that you sometimes disagree, that others are not pulling their weight, that your ideas are better than the group's.... If you can try to take others' points of view seriously and attempt to coordinate, contribute as much as you can, see this as a learning experience, and make your own needs known, you'll find that collaborative learning can be much more rewarding than individual efforts.

11. If your first reaction to the topics and the nature of the topics is, "I already know this" then think of ways you can extend your thinking.... If the ideas are new to you, don't be afraid to contribute your perspective.... You must take responsibility for your own learning and take seriously your responsibility for helping others to learn.

12. Have fun!

The guidelines describe the responsibilities of group members in completing their group task. They are required to research content-based instruction and plan and execute a 90-minute presentation for the whole class. The presentation should describe the learning/teaching principles the group is using, relate to the Whole Language framework used in the course, provide the class with an opportunity to be actively involved in doing something in the course of the presentation, and structure time for discussion and questions. In short, this should be a lesson which is consistent with Whole Language principles.

Further, group members are instructed to plan the presentation collaboratively within the group. That is, they are instructed to discuss plans and <u>decide</u> together the structure of their presentation, take other members' points of view seriously, and take responsibility for their own learning <u>and</u> for helping group members to learn.

The small group structures an authentic task of <u>teaching</u>. Students research a topic, organize the information, plan a lesson for a particular class (of peers), teach that lesson, and reflect upon the experience and the "feedback" they receive from the instructor and fellow students. It is authentic in a number of ways. First, the students in the class really do <u>need the information</u> contained in the presentation. The group members are the only ones that have had time to explore their particular topic in any depth. Further, the

instructor does not follow up the group presentations in order to add additional information. The presentations and readings the groups select are the only source of information provided on these topics within the course. Second, the process of planning for the presentation is realistic because group members must come to some understanding of the topic to be taught, choose a particular focus for a 90-minute presentation and then create the lesson plan. They have to choose the reading materials for the class and prepare any materials to be handed out or used in the class demonstration. Third, they have to actually teach the lesson plan they have prepared. The major way in which this is <u>not</u> realistic is that this is a team-teaching situation which is all too rare in most schools.

It is now possible to answer the second question posed at the beginning of this section on cooperative learning--Why use neophytes to teach graduate-level subject matter? First, requiring students to actually teach peers the course material that they are researching in their groups makes the small group work immediately relevant to group members. Second, having students actually teach in a teacher education course provides an opportunity for students to learn through <u>praxis</u>: to create a lesson based upon their theories of teaching and learning, examine and reflect on those concepts through the group dialogue, and put these ideas into practice by teaching. This experiential base of

the course is a very important part of the small group process, as I will demonstrate in the subsequent chapters.

Collaboration does not happen automatically in any classroom and must be set up carefully by the instructor. It is to an examination of the introduction by the instructor of the collaborative norms that we now turn.

Constructing Collaborative Norms: Viewing Peers as "Resources"

This Methods course has a set of communal norms which provide the social foundations which allow collaboration to be constructed in the small groups. These "collaborative norms" are both peculiar to the members of this class and drawn from larger institutional norms operating within the School of Education, the university, and society at large.

An important source of collaborative norms is the course instructor. It is her authority as the professor that allows her to structure the course around small group collaboration. She also provides a rationale for the collaborative norms. I have uncovered no instances in this course in which students have directly challenged a course norm proposed by the instructor. This is, itself, a class norm which is reflective of the instructor's status within the institutional setting of the School of Education and the university.

In this analysis, I focus on the voice of the instructor as she presented the course to the class in the

first two class sessions. In a course which is explicitly designed to mute the voice of the instructor, it is important to understand how she was able to influence the educational process. My research suggests that despite the fact that much of the course took place without her presence or direct control, she had great influence on the enactment of the course through the establishment of course norms and the structuring of the group task.

First Class

The instructor has great power in constructing the class norms and it is instructive to look at how she talks and writes about the course to her students. In the first class session at the beginning of the fall term, the instructor took the first hour to outline the major components of the course structure. She also established a set of powerful course norms which would operate throughout the term.[7] A central one for collaborative learning was her continual positioning of students as being "resources" for one another.

In her opening remarks the first night of class, she said:

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7. The instructor introduces a class norm by first setting a precedent (i.e., stating a class rule or modeling a particular behavior) and if that precedent is not challenged, it becomes a class norm. However, norms are located in group behavior; hence, a class norm introduced by the instructor (e.g., working collaboratively or viewing one another as resources) is only fully defined and realized in the local enactments of group members.

> We find, in fact, that newcomers to the field are great resource people because you aren't jaded. [laugh] You don't have all the answers and you come up with questions that are important to answer.... The whole idea is to begin seeing one another as resources and that's the key to success in the course ... and so we have heterogeneous groupings as mixed up as possible so that we have lots of resources to draw on in the group, and therefore you will have a stronger presentation.

The instructor refers to students in the course as "resources" over ten times during her introduction to the course. She states that students who have taken courses with her previously are "resources" because of their knowledge of collaborative learning; second language speakers are "extremely valuable" to the group because they can tell monolingual English speakers what it is like to learn English as a second language and what it is like to learn and teach English in another country; small group facilitators are "resources" because they can provide "feedback on the collaborative process."

Interestingly, two groups which are not explicitly referred to as "resources" are experienced teachers and the instructor herself. The instructor seems to go out of her way in this initial presentation of self to minimize her own role and to de-emphasize her "expert" status in the course:

> Every time there is a presentation I think about things differently, so I learn a great deal from the presentations.... I change my own teaching from some of the things that have been discussed and demonstrated in the classroom.

The instructor clearly positions herself as a "learner" who is not infallible:

> All right, the first few classes--about six classes--I will be doing things [presenting course content] ...

> and it also gives you a chance to see that, uh, I make mistakes all the time [laugh] and, uh, you can make mistakes too and, uh, we eventually get through it.

Experienced teachers are not referred to as "resources," not because they are not perceived as resources by the instructor but because in this talk she challenges them to "get rid of your doubting cap" and use the course to "play" and "experiment" with new ideas and "reflect" on old practices. Experienced teachers are often difficult to satisfy because they are more familiar with many of the teaching ideas which are discussed in the course.[8] The instructor seems to direct her talk to them to encourage them to get involved with the course:

> Now, if you've been very active in TESOL, in fact maybe these ideas aren't the newest ideas to you--that you have read about them, heard them, and in that case you need to think and approach and try to figure out, "All right, how can I step back and really think about what I'm doing and really reflect on it?"

In these initial remarks to the class, the instructor is laying the ground work for two <u>key epistemological beliefs</u> that she believes are foundational for collaborative work: (1) The instructor is not the primary source of course knowledge, and 2) students can learn from a wide variety of peers (e.g., newcomers, second language speakers,

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8. One of the innovations that the instructor was attempting to implement in this semester's course was having experienced teachers who are enrolled in the course take on the role of facilitator. She hoped that providing a different role in the class would appeal to these teachers. Two of the facilitators for the small groups were students with a great deal of teaching experience.

facilitators).[9] It is important to note that up to this point, the instructor has not attempted to address interactional features which would foster collaboration. Rather, she has concentrated on providing a rationale for collaborative and heterogeneous grouping.

In addition to her initial remarks in class, the instructor handed out a course outline, which included "Guidelines for Workshop Presentations" discussed above. In these guidelines, the instructor states two other norms for the class: first, that individuals are responsible for their own learning, and second, that individuals are also responsible for "helping others learn" by taking "others' points of views seriously" and coordinating with fellow group members.

Second Class

The second week's class was devoted to an introduction to collaborative learning in the second language classroom. The basic rationale for collaborative learning was given by the instructor as follows:

> If you have a collaborative classroom, in fact, you have the possibility of many more ways of organizing your classroom for whatever it is you're doing.

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9. The categories of people in this course as described by the instructor in this talk are the following: experienced teachers (my term), "newcomers" or "inexperienced," "second language speakers" or "those who come from other countries," "facilitators," and by implication, instructor.

The instructor in this session focused on small group collaborative work.[10] After a brief introduction, she broke the class into small groups to discuss and critique a case study of a social studies teacher who attempted to introduce collaborative group work to her second language students, with unsatisfactory results. The instructor noted that Method students had not had a chance to read about collaborative learning beforehand but could rely on two sources of knowledge: common sense, and someone in the class who had more experience than others with this type of learning. These two sources of knowledge are consistent with the instructor's approach to the entire course, as she encouraged students to use both their own experiences and knowledge (i.e., "common sense") and the knowledge of their classmates. Her approach also strongly resonates with Freire's (1973) call for education to strengthen adults' belief in themselves and their own knowledge (see also Belenky et al., 1986).

In the large class discussion which followed the small group work, the instructor stressed the importance of establishing collaborative norms and noted that these norms must be negotiated among students. The instructor also noted that in order to successfully delegate authority when students are working in small groups, the teacher must stay

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10. The instructor noted that there are many possible class configurations which could be collaborative: pair work, small group, class meetings, teams, learning centers, class discussions, and seat work.

away--a role which she called "supportive supervision." Finally, the instructor also discussed the fact that conflict will arise during the semester for students in the course. She observed, "One of the reasons you have a facilitator in the group is to help you reflect on some of these issues."

In sum, the second class of the semester was focused on the use of collaborative learning primarily in elementary and secondary school contexts. The major theme which came out of the case study discussions was the importance of preparing students to engage in collaborative learning through establishing collaborative norms and the role of the teacher in this type of learning. Interestingly, there was no discussion of the nature of these collaborative norms nor of how they might be introduced into a class. Nor was there any discussion of the collaborative norms for the small group work within this class.[11]

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the Methods course: its structure, rationale, and implementation. The structure provides a cogent

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11. Jerri reports that her original plan was to discuss the types of norms that one might use in group work and how to implement them but she simply ran out of time. Time seemed to be a constant issue in the course. I wonder if one of the ways in which this course socialized students to the realities of schooling was through the harried pace and time constraints operating in both the small group meetings and whole class presentations.

response to the concerns raised in the introduction. First, the instructor treated the diversity of that group of students who entered class the first night as a resource for learning, rather than an impediment. By organizing the class around collaborative dialogue in small groups, she hoped to use the heterogeneity of the group to facilitate the exploration of diverse views on teaching and learning.

Second, she acknowledged both the critical role context plays in second language pedagogy and the impossibility of adequately treating the vast range of potential teaching sites encompassed within the class. She attempted to resolve this paradox by focussing the course, in large part, on Whole Language teaching within the context of the Methods class. Each group was responsible for planning a lesson that considered the particulars of teaching their topic to these students in this classroom. It is through this experience that students often report that they gain a deeper understanding of central tenets of Whole Language: cooperative peer learning, task-based learning, and student-centered learning.

The organization of the Methods course has been created to challenge students' conceptions of what it means to be a teacher or student. This course asks students to play the role of Janus, forever looking in two directions simultaneously. On the one hand, they are asked to experience a Whole Language course as students, looking at the class organization as it relates to their own learning

experiences. On the other hand, they are also encouraged to reflect upon their experiences with the course in terms of both content and process for what it suggests about how they might want to teach their own second language classes.

The Methods course is connected with many of the concerns raised in the teacher education section of Chapter 1. It is designed to apprentice students to the rich Discourse of second language teaching through a host of activities: dialogue with peers, teaching, reading the literature of the field, attending conferences, writing lesson plans, and experiencing as students a collaborative, task based, Whole Language classroom (Gee, 1990). However, the course also challenges students to question and critique current schooling practices (Beyer, 1988). The process of studying in a class in which the fundamental assumptions of education are challenged can be exhilarating, challenging, and confusing for students. An innovative course like this one not only generates new opportunities for conceptualizing the process of teaching and learning but also creates its own sets of problematics. This research project has been designed to capture the enactment of this class over the course of the term. It is to a detailed study of one of the small collaborative groups that we now turn.

CHAPTER 3

COLLABORATION IN THE CONTENT-BASED LEARNING GROUP

Introduction

The heart of the Methods course can be found in the collaborative small groups. These groups generate most of the class content through their presentations, structure the majority of class time, and, based upon the reports of students, are the primary source of learning within the course. In order to really understand how the Methods course is organized and functions, it is essential that we come to understand what happens in these small groups. In order to do this, I have investigated one of the groups in the 1991 class--the Content-based learning group.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the research literature on cooperative learning. This research suggests that small group learning can be superior to individual or whole class learning (under certain conditions). However, little research has been done on the use of cooperative learning with adults nor has much of the research focused on interactive processes which a group uses while working together. This research project begins to address these gaps in the literature.

This chapter is organized around a narrative of the Content group's meetings as they go about the task of researching their topic, planning their presentation for

classmates, and giving the presentation. The focus is primarily on the group dialogue and, hence, relies heavily upon the transcripts of these meetings. The narrative is supplemented with my analysis of the collaborative dialogue; its structure and function within the group. An important part of this analysis is to identify norms toward which the group members are orienting. The chapter ends with a summative discussion of collaboration as it was enacted in this setting and a set of issues--affordances and problematics -which this experience raised for group members.

The dialogues structured in the these collaborative groups are, in fact, a type of instructional discourse. Its structure and function are a primary focus of this chapter. However, the small groups are designed for a wide range of purposes which extend far beyond being merely a graduate level "discussion group." The collaborative dialogue around which the instructor organizes the small group work is not simply the <u>way</u> the groups interact; it also becomes an important source of learning in its own right. Issues that members encounter in working in their group are also central to the premises of the Whole language teaching approach being studied. For example, as the members work together, they also learn about the strengths and challenges of implementing collaborative small group learning.

Educational systems typically create two broad types of "participant structures" (i.e., interaction patterns)

(Philips, 1983): (1) teacher-led instruction (e.g., recitation, lecture or whole class discussion); (2) individual students working with a written text (either reading or writing). While the Methods course uses these, the instructor has designed two additional participant structures in which students learn with and from peers: 3) Equal status peers collaboratively working on a task; 4) Small group members teaching fellow students. These new forms of participation have a profound impact upon the social world created within the course (e.g., relationships between instructor and students and among students).

In a broad sense, there are two concepts that provide a frame for viewing the small group learning as it was enacted in the content-based instruction group. First, group members report that this was a collaborative experience (and this is certainly consistent with my own observations). As a researcher, what I want to know is what actually happened in this group. In other words, if the group members are calling this a collaborative experience, what does "collaborative" mean in this setting? Hence, collaboration is an orienting concept for this research report.

Second, the Methods course is a task-based approach to teacher education. The course is structured around the small group "task," which includes not only the types of "products" produced by the group (e.g., Presentation and dialogue journals) but also the process of collaboration. The task is the primary in-class activity through which

students learn and it provides the second orienting concept of this report.

Organizing Questions

I use this chapter to provide a description and analysis of how one group from the course went about collaboratively researching a topic and planning a presentation. It is my intent to make the description sufficiently broad so that it is possible to gain an overall sense of how the group work progressed through the semester. A more fine grained analysis of the collaborative discourse created in these meetings is offered in the following chapter on Voice.

The following are five primary questions which structure this report:

1. **What are the primary group activities engaged in by the group to complete their task?** This question focuses on the actual doing of small group work-- What do members talk about? How do they structure their discussions? How do they make decisions? What do individuals in the group do outside of the group meetings to complete the group task?

2. **How does the group explore the question "What is content?" in the course of the group meetings?** This question provides a warrant for tracking the dialogue which surrounds a central topic of the group meetings. By tracking the discourse surrounding this question over the course of two months and eleven meetings, we gain a clearer

picture of what the group actually does in their meetings and identify some of the collaborative norms being enacted in this group.

3. **How did the structure of the instructor's task affect the small group process?** As we have seen, the task assigned by the instructor asks the group to work collaboratively on a specific topic and to prepare a particular type of presentation for the whole class. This question guides me to investigate the effect that the task (including course norms) plays in shaping the group dialogue and actions.

4. **What are the collaborative norms operating in the group?** One of the goals of this research is to identify the social structure operating in this educational setting. In particular, I am interested in better understanding the group norms which undergird "collaboration" in order to assess their educational implications and their relation to the voice of group members.

5. **How did group members view their own learning as a result of their participation in their small group?** The course is designed to provide students with opportunities to learn about current approaches to second language teaching (with a primary focus on the Whole language approach) through both the study of course content and experiencing a course organized around Whole language principles. This answer to this question can provide insights into the

strengths and limitations of this approach to teacher education.

The primary sources of data used to answer these questions are the following: (1) Audio tapes of small group meetings,[1] (2) documents created by the group in their work together, (3) dialogue journals, and (4) interviews with group members.

The lofty rhetoric on hermeneutics and praxis that Beyer (1988) introduced in Chapter 1 is about to meet the complex and messy reality which accompanies people working on a common task, taking risks, and attempting to construct meaning and knowledge together. And yet, the members of this group responded to the challenges of this task with a seriousness of purpose, intelligence, and respect for one another which is rather extraordinary. The Content group came together as absolute strangers and in the course of two months created both a powerful lesson for their classmates and a form of dialogue which allowed each member of the group to have a voice. Before discussing their work, I will now introduce the members of this group.

Content Group Members

The content-based instruction group consisted of six members who had a wide range of teaching experience, academic preparation for teaching, teaching interests,

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1. Of the 12 meetings leading up to the presentation, nine were tape recorded.

language backgrounds, agendas for taking the Methods course, and distinct personalities. The group members indicated an interest in content-based learning on the first night of class; consequently, this group was formed. The following are brief biographical sketches of the members.

Lisa[2] is in her early 30s and has taught music to children of all ages for 10 years. She has made two albums of children's songs written and performed collaboratively with children. She has a beautiful singing voice and performs publicly. This is her first class in the "School of Ed" and she hopes to use it as a springboard to acceptance into the Master's program in ESL. She is an idea generator and always played a very active role in group discussions. She also took on the role of "gate keeper" for Sachi (and other group members).

Danielle is in her mid-twenties and has no teaching experience. She has a degree in International Relations, has travelled in Central America, and is in the Master's program to gain teacher certification in both social studies and ESL. This is also her first full semester in the program. Danielle is a strong group member who consistently tries to keep the group "on task." She

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2. All names of participants in the group have been changed in order to ensure anonymity.

observed a local high school ESL class as part of the course.[3]

Sachi was born and raised in Japan but now lives in the United States and has an American husband. She is in her thirties and has been studying astronomy but began to teach Japanese language in the university and has decided to explore its possibilities as this line of work seemed more compatible with her role as mother to a elementary-aged child. This is her second course in education. Sachi is a quiet and thoughtful member of the group. While she speaks and understands English quite well, she is clearly not a native speaker. The group often asks her to share her knowledge of learning English as a second language.

Nick is in his thirties and is taking his second course in education. He is also quiet and soft spoken and can often be seen following group members' talk with head nods and a steady refrain of "uh huh's." He has not taught before and has a degree in Urban Planning and currently works at the university library. He is not in the Master's program but is using this course to "test the waters."

Adrea is in her mid-twenties and has taught English in Portugal and is the group's polyglot as she speaks Portuguese, French, and Spanish. She is finishing her last semester of course work in the Master's program and is being

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3. Students have the option of observing some type of ESL class as part of the course. These observations fulfill part of the practicum field experience required for Massachusetts state certification.

certified to teach social studies and is preparing to do her teaching practicum in the following spring semester. As a veteran of the School of Education she has taken several courses from Jerri Willett, including second language acquisition, in which small group learning was an important part. She has not had good experiences with small group learning and feels that it is "not her thing." However, it is clear that she is interested in this approach to education and wants to have a positive group experience this time around.

Francis is in the group in the roles of both facilitator and researcher. I have been in the field of ESL teaching for the past fifteen years. I have a Master's degree in ESL and am in my late thirties. I have informed the group that I am interested in doing research on the course and consider myself a participant-observer in this group with my participation circumscribed by my role as facilitator. I have no particular expertise in content-based instruction and have joined the group to help them with "group process" issues.

The diversity of teaching experiences, course work in education, and cultural backgrounds is typical for the small groups in this course. The instructor balances the requests of students to study a particular topic with her own agenda to have as heterogenous grouping as possible for each group (e.g., Grouping by level of teaching experience, gender, and cultural background). Originally, the group had an

additional student from Taiwan who in the second week of the term moved into the Problem Posing group which had been her first topic choice.

The Group Task

This group is responsible for researching "content-based instruction" for second language learners. This topic centers around issues of what should be the content of ESL instruction and how teachers can support second language students efforts to learn content. A traditional approach to second language instruction has been to focus on the language itself and have the curriculum sequenced around the study of the language (e.g., grammatical forms). A content-based approach is to have students study mainstream subject matter--math, science, and social studies--in order to both keep up with peers studying these subjects and learn the second language through the study of these subjects.

Research on second language students in public schools suggests that there is an important difference between the acquisition of oral language used in every-day social interactions or "basic interpersonal communication skills" (BICS) and literacy based "cognitive/academic language proficiency" (CALP) found in the academic discourse of schools (Cummins, 1980). Second language speaking children in the United States often acquire BICS relatively quickly, in many cases in a matter of months, whereas the literacy based language skills often take many years to acquire

native-line proficiency. The most recent research findings suggest that it takes more than six years of schooling in order for ESL elementary students to acquire the language skills necessary to succeed in mainstream classes (and on standardized tests) conducted in English (Ramirez, 1991)

A second set of issues in content-based instruction is focused on how to best teach academic content to children who have not fully acquired CALP skills. Many educators stress the importance of teaching language skills <u>through</u> content. In other words, teach mainstream subjects (e.g., math, science, etc.) but "scaffold"[4] or support children in such a way that they learn not only the content but also English. There are a wide variety of teaching approaches to this topic including the use of simplified texts, creating ESL classrooms which teach mainstream content but use techniques to ensure that students are able to fully participate, and bilingual classrooms in which both English and the native language are used.

The group members chose to study this topic on the first night of class. Adrea and Danielle are both getting certified in social studies and this is a way to combine that subject matter with second language study. Sachi felt dissatisfied with exclusively focusing on sentence structure in her teaching of Japanese and thought that a content approach might be an improvement. Lisa is interested in

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4. "Scaffolding" is a term used by Applebee and Langer (1984) to indicate the productive support that a teacher can provide when working with students.

exploring ways that music and ESL might be combined. It's not clear why Nick chose this particular group.

An important part of the small group task is the creation of the collaborative dialogue which takes place in the group meetings. It is through this process that group members discuss the course readings and their own experiences and opinions in an attempt to make sense of content-based instruction. The group meetings provide a "semiotic space" (Lemke, 1989) to create and negotiate meanings, learn the vocabulary of a new field, and learn from the diverse experiences of peers.

Fundamental to Whole Language teaching is the creation of a community which can work together on a common task and teach and learn from one another. By organizing the small group task as collaborative, the instructor provides the structure for a community of learners to form. Creating a community of learners is seen by the instructor as an effective way not only to learn about a topic but also to allow group members to learn about working with peers--a common work unit in schools (e.g., committees). However, a community must grow out of the interactions of its members and certainly cannot be "assigned" by a teacher. As we will see, this group did indeed grow into a learning community.

By asking these students to explore content-based learning in depth and then teaching the rest of the class about this subject, the instructor has created the conditions for them to become "experts" within the class.

The purpose of this, in keeping with Whole Language principles, is to promote from within the field a sense of teachers as competent professionals. This also provides students with the opportunity to develop the ability to research new topics which is an important part of teaching.

The group has been given the task of teaching their classmates about content-based learning. This 90-minute presentation was scheduled for the ninth class session on October 31. The group is also responsible for selecting and distributing background reading on their topic the week prior to the presentation.

I was assigned as the facilitator for this group, a role that I had played in a previous Methods course. My job was to help the group with "process issues" (e.g., Helping members work collaboratively, mediate conflicts between group members, and provide an outlet for emotions raised by group work) with particular emphasis on ensuring that all group members have a <u>voice</u> in the group dialogue. I joined into the group's substantive discussion more and more as the term progressed. I only attended group meetings every other week as I was also a member of a "facilitators' group" which met to discuss issues of facilitation in this setting. However, I did not play any role in the group presentation. In addition, I wrote a dialogue journal with each group member.

Dialogue journals were exchanged between each group member and me approximately every other week. They were

loosely structured to allow dialogue around academic issues in the Methods course, process issues within the group, observations of ESL classrooms in local schools, lectures or conferences attended, and personal issues. They also allowed group members to experience for themselves writing a dialogue journal, a technique that is gaining in popularity in ESL classes.[5] They proved to be a wonderful way for me to get to know the group members better and provided a forum for us to discuss substantive issues of course content and process.

The group had 8 weeks to research their topic and prepare for a 90 minute presentation. They started out meeting for the first hour of each class in their small groups and as the presentation came closer they started meeting half an hour to forty-five minutes before class. In addition, they met three times outside of class for more extended planning sessions of approximately two and a half hours each. The total meeting time was approximately seventeen hours. Table 2 (below) is a time line of the meeting schedule up to the presentation.

The twelve meetings leading up to the presentation can be separated into four periods. The first period, called "Beginnings," consists of the first four meetings and provided members with an opportunity to both meet one another and begin the exploration of the group's topic and

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5. The instructor handed out on the first night of class an article on dialogue journals, "Dialogue journal writing with limited-English-proficient (LEP) students" (Peyton, 1987).

presentation. The second period focuses on just one irregular meeting in which the group pauses and examines how the group is working together, particularly in relation to Sachi. This meeting is called the "Process meeting," and was an important moment in the group's evolution.

The third period starting immediately after the "Process meeting" is marked by a greater focus on planning the presentation and a growing frustration with the inability of the group to come to agreement on the key concepts of content-based instruction and the lack of concrete plans for the presentation. I have named these three meetings, "Struggling to Focus and Decide." The fourth and final period of four meetings which I call "Coherence and Decision Making" are marked by the addition of outside class meetings and a total focus on preparing for the presentation. These meetings are driven by the powerful incentive of a rapidly approaching presentation and are characterized by smooth collaborative dialogue in which both decisions are made and all group members participate. Table 2 provides a representation of the meeting sequence.

Table 2

Group Meeting Time Line

Meeting no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Date	9/5	12	19	26	10/3	10	17	21	24	27	30	31

Beginnings: The First Four Meetings

The content-based instruction group members selected a small room stuck at the end of the second floor hallway in the School of Education. They gathered around one end of a long table which dominates the room. By 6:45, the usual meeting time, the hall is lined with empty faculty offices and appears deserted.

These early meetings were characterized by a primary focus on what the group believed to be the central issues of content-based instruction. In these meetings, group members were not yet feeling the pressure of their presentation and were able to focus on making sense of a new topic.

Meetings One and Two

In the first class of the fall term, students chose the topic in second language instruction they would like to focus on. The Content group members met for the first time that evening. I did not attend that meeting (I was meeting with the facilitators) but group members report that they discussed what they knew of content-based teaching and exchanged some information about their personal histories.

The second week of class was attended by all the members of the group. A group of strangers, each with their own agendas--exploring a new field, trying to get into the Master's program, last course of graduate work, conducting research, etc.--gathered together to do the task assigned by the course instructor. Early on in the meeting, the group

lost a member as a spot became available in the Problem Posing group for Li Hwa, and since that was her first choice the instructor gave her the option of moving and she took it. Up to this point, I had been sitting in the outer edge of the group and I slipped into her seat so that I could feel a bit more "with" the group. My status would be unclear for quite some time as I was only a part-time member--meeting with them every other week and not doing the all important presentation. I was also audio-taping the meetings and group members were not exactly sure what that was about.[6]

The group was not clear on my role in the group. It would have to be negotiated. Early on in that meeting, the group looked to me for leadership in setting the agenda.

Excerpt 1[7]

Adrea: Do we have an agenda for today? I don't want to be like
(The group turns to look at me. I shake my head "no.")
No, we don't have an agenda at all?
Lisa: That's abs that's weird because none of us really know what we're talking about and we don't have the book....

Adrea and Lisa's surprise that I, as facilitator, was not setting the agenda was based, I believe, on the expectation that I would in some way have a leadership position in the meetings--that a facilitator was like a teacher. However, I felt that my role was not to preside

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6. Facilitators routinely audio-taped their groups' meetings in order to gain insights into the group process.

7. See Appendix A for explanations of the symbols used in these transcriptions.

over the meetings but simply to observe, write dialogue journals with members, aid the group as they went about the difficult task of collaboration, and perhaps to enter into the discussion if it was not too intrusive. The educational philosophy behind my role was grounded in the belief that for students to feel in charge of their own group, it was important I not be seen as a teacher. They would have to set their own agenda. I hoped to establish in this interaction that responsibility for the planning and decision making would rest with them.[8] And it did!

One of the difficulties at this meeting was that the assigned text for this group, Language and Content (Mohan, 1986) was out of print. Hence, the group had not been able to read anything to prepare for this session. However, Adrea brought in (on her own initiative) a summary from the first chapter of Mohan's text and I, after consulting with the course instructor, had made copies of the first two chapters of the text for the group.

In this meeting, the group began to discuss some of the core questions around content-based instruction: What type of class are we talking about--a straight ESL or a subject matter class such as science or social studies class with

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8. While the precise role that a facilitator played in the group meetings was left to the discretion of each facilitator, based upon the needs of a particular group, the norm established in the facilitators' meetings was for facilitators to constrain their own level of participation in order to enable group members to take full responsibility for the research of their group topic and the planning of the presentation.

ESL students? Is it better for ESL students to focus on the study of language or learn language <u>through</u> the study of a particular content subject? These questions would occupy the group for much of the semester.

The group spent a great deal of the hour discussing the nature of content and its function in second language instruction. They set out many of the central questions and dilemmas of their topic--Where does content come from?--and nominated a number of likely sources: Students' own cultures, American culture, school curriculum, and students' needs and interests.

While most of the group did not have a chance to read any of the Mohan text, they had read a chapter from the course text by Enright and McCloskey (1988) in which the authors argue for the importance of using the students' own cultural background as a integral component of the curriculum. Much discussion centered around this issue.

The group talked about the importance of content--it allows language to be taught in context; it is meaningful and real; and it is motivating. One theme that developed was the distinction between a second language class in which the content is <u>language</u> as contrasted with a regular subject matter class in which students (including second language students) studied science or social studies.

Problems were also noted. How do you select content in a language class? If you use students' interests or culture, how do you know what these interests are? Adrea

and I argued that simply asking students what they wanted to study would often not be effective based upon our teaching experiences with adults in Portugal and Japan (respectively). Lisa also noted that focusing on students' cultural background can set them apart from peers.

Sachi did not support a strong focus on students' cultural backgrounds as a promising basis for language study. It turns out her favorite English class had been "Rock Lyrics"--content she was genuinely interested in.

Excerpt 2

Lisa: I would just like to ask could you say something? because obviously you've been in this situation.
Sachi: Yes but can only from adult points of view
Lisa: Go ahead.
Sachi: ... um my understanding is like when I first came here I took a couple of ESL classes.... The reading really varied like scientific thing or scientific article to whatever the teacher wanted to. It is really felt like doing it for no ha purpose
Tom: uhmmm
Sachi: See? On the other hand for instance uh when I had the class called rock lyrics ...
(loud laughter by group)
Its for real you know native speaker English class. It was tough for me on the other hand I really had interest for in it so it really what should I say it really helped to shape up my English probably much more than the ESL class did.

This stretch of talk reveals a number of common patterns which were present throughout the term and which, I believe, are foundational to the enactment of "collaboration" in this setting. First, note the way that Lisa both structures a turn of talk for Sachi and also positions her as a resource for the group based upon her identity as a second language learner.

Both Lisa and Sachi frequently played complementary roles. Lisa often posed questions to group members and frequently solicited turns of talk for Sachi. Sachi often entered the group discourse by discussing her own experiences of learning English. In the above example, Sachi had not spoken at all prior to Lisa's question. (However, as I found out later, Sachi was uncomfortable with this pattern of solicitation and related issues; see Chapter 6).

We can also see two themes on content learning which would be raised again and again by the group. First, that content which is not thematic is not effective in language learning as students experience it as having "no purpose." Second, the positive role that content which is <u>interesting</u> to students (and thematic) plays in language learning. Finally, in this short stretch of talk we can see that the group discourse is structured to allow students to draw on their own <u>personal experiences</u> to gain insights into the course material.

The group discourse in this second meeting definitely had a collaborative feel to it as group members listened to one another, built upon each other's ideas, and solicited each other's opinions. Their talk was filled with requests for clarification, questions asked of one another, and plenty of time for everyone to join into the talk, although two members--Nick and Sachi--were quieter than the rest, a pattern which would continue for the semester.

Another common pattern of these meetings was using the personal experience of group members to help make sense of their topic. While discussing the question--Where does content come from in a language class?--I referred to my teaching experience in Japan and how it was often difficult to get students to tell me about their interests; Adrea talked about how older women in Portugal also did not respond to topics in class which were too personal as she noted that, "It wasn't something they saw as part of the context of being in a class." Danielle used her own insights into a high school ESL class she was observing. Lisa would use her own extensive knowledge of teaching music to connect to the group discussion. Nick was really the only member not to routinely draw on personal experience to enter the discussion.

This meeting and the subsequent ones were spent in intense discussion with little time for off-topic conversations. Further, they were whole group discussions with very little side talk between two group members. In this meeting, there was a certain amount of tension between Lisa and Adrea. Both were quick to disagree and argue their points. While there was never any overt hostility between them, both mentioned in the early weeks of the semester that they felt this tension.

At the end of the hour, the group joined their colleagues in the "Open Space" in the basement of the School

of Education for a presentation by Jerri on using peer collaboration in the second language classroom.

Meeting Three

> It's like playing with the Kitty Cat
> Instead of cruelly cutting it open.
> Lisa

The third meeting of the semester took place without either Sachi, who had a sick child at home, or me, as I was at a facilitators' meeting. As the group gathered, I swung by to set up a tape recorder and picked up the first dialogue journals. The group had read some of the Mohan text during the week and began to use the specialized vocabulary which he introduced. Early in the meeting, Danielle and Lisa are discussing Mohan's contrast between "experiential learning" and "expository learning."

Excerpt 3

Lisa: I think what he is trying to say: at least for me ... is that experiential learning you're trying to either simulate the experience or actually experience this thing
Danielle: Right and it has to be real
Lisa: Right ... whereas in expository learning you're putting up some kind of graph and this represents something. It's not experiential it's theoretical....

Danielle and Lisa are shown here discussing two concepts from Mohan's text. The paraphrasing and discussion of concepts gleaned from readings would be an important source of new vocabulary and ideas for framing content-based instruction.

Often, the ideas gleaned from course texts were built upon, modified or challenged by group members. In this next

excerpt of dialogue, the group members weave together Mohan's ideas on the communicative basis of language-learning with their own knowledge base.

Excerpt 4

Lisa: Anyway here's what I wanted to say. The rationale for content-based learning from what I understand () he's [Mohan] saying is that you're trying to use language as a tool for communication but it really is a tool
Danielle: () It is.
Lisa: Right. It's a tool because what you really want to do is help your students build a successful independent life
Nick: Mmm.
Lisa: in a new culture. And to be able to do that they have to learn the language so I'm trying to just back to what you [Danielle] were saying which is here they are using language and they don't even realize that they're using language.
?: Right.
Lisa: which is exactly what they have to do in order to have an independent life they can't be thinking about if they're grammatically correct all the time I mean they have to be able to function ...
Adrea: mmmhuh. And that you learn through that process of struggling to get your point across and struggling to understand someone else
Lisa: Right.
Adrea: I guess they call it like negotiating meaning. That that is what that's how you learn.
Lisa: Right and if you and if you get your point across you've used your tools successfully
Adrea: Right.
Lisa: You have built what it was you were trying to build.
Adrea: mmhuh
Danielle: Which is why you need a content so that you do have a point to get across cause otherwise you might not want to struggle if its meaningless
Adrea and Lisa: Right

The group dialogue here flows smoothly from one speaker to the next, each one building upon the last speaker's ideas. Lisa lays out the premise of Mohan by stating that "you're trying to use language as a tool for communication" in order to help students achieve "a successful independent

life in a new culture." Actively "communicating" is the key to that learning process.

Adrea then brings in the concept that students learn through struggling to communicate and understand others and uses the phrase "negotiating meaning," which is a concept she was introduced to in Jerri's second language acquisition course the previous spring.[9] Lisa then connects successful communication, "getting your point across," to the idea of viewing language as a "tool." Danielle finishes this stretch of talk by connecting this discussion to the concept of "content" and the motivating effect the right type of content has on students.

The constant refrain of backchannel responses (i.e., "right" and "mmhuh") supports the structure of this conversation. The simultaneous "right" which completes this stretch of talk by both Adrea and Lisa provides a kind of collaborative "stamp" on this mutually constructed dialogue.

One of the interesting aspects of this discussion is the way that some of the fundamentals of second language teaching as it is currently configured are highlighted. The focus on "communication," "meaning negotiation," motivating students' through a rich "content," are the staple of our field's current discourse (see Enright & McCloskey, 1988;

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9. Lisa's use of the pronoun "they" in her comment, "I guess they call it like negotiating meaning," signals that she is <u>not</u> a member of the second language acquisition discourse that uses that term. While she is familiar with the concept and can use it to make sense of Lisa's description of language learning, it is not (yet?) her own.

Freeman & Freeman, 1992). While Danielle and Lisa are both newcomers to the field of second language teaching, they are able to draw upon course texts and perspectives on communication and learning which pervade our culture in order to step directly into the mainstream of second language instructional discourse.

Roughly midway through the meeting, Lisa suggests that the group choose a topic or content to build a presentation around. Adrea and Danielle argue against this idea by noting that they need more time to read and discuss basic issues and theory before deciding on a particular type of content. Lisa responds:

Excerpt 5

283 **Lisa:** Okay we're going to need to pull all our
284 materials together anyway we're going to need to have
285 that stuff. How we order it that's how the theory
286 comes in .... so let's decide on a topic as at least we
287 can channel our search for materials in that topic area
288 then we'll sort sift organize apply everything we're
289 reading to whatever we going to present.

What is interesting about this exchange is how the group members resolve this issue. At first, the three women argue back and forth. Although Danielle and Adrea disagree with Lisa's idea, Lisa does not back down but, rather, attempts to persuade them as we can see in Excerpt 5. Finally, Adrea moves to resolve the impasse by raising a collaborative norm.

Excerpt 6

313 **Adrea:** ... we three actually have like different ways
314 that we want to approach it so we need to think about
315 how we can accommodate each other and try and
316 **Nick:** mmhuh

317 **Adrea:** ... so I want to see how we can maybe try to
318 work together and and comp and all of us compromise a
319 little bit. What do you think Nick? ...

Adrea raises the norm of members being able to "accommodate" each other through the process of "compromise." She then invites Nick to give his opinion about Lisa's suggestion. When he also does not support choosing a topic at this time, the issue is settled. However, Lisa's willingness to <u>push</u> for her idea does result in the group agreeing that this is something they need to do soon. This suggests that a group member's willingness to be a bit aggressive in getting others to listen is a part of this discourse structure. It is a topic that the group discussed in a Process meeting a couple of weeks later.

For the time being, the group followed the instructor's guidelines, which suggest that they "come to terms with the concepts" they want to present before worrying about the presentation format. However, the group made plans to begin considering the presentation and Lisa's idea to choose a topic for their lesson the following week. Table 3 (p. 114) shows the schedule they drew up for the weeks leading up to the presentation.

While the group did not actually keep to this schedule, it suggests both an early attempt to get themselves organized and a willingness to begin the process of planning the presentation <u>before</u> they had come to a full understanding of the issues of content-based instruction.

Table 3

Tentative Schedule

Class no.	Date	Agenda
3	9/19	General agenda Brainstorm rough outline of presentation
4	9/26	Choose content topic Start looking for new resources Finish Mohan
5	10/3	Present new articles/resources Create rough lesson plan
6	10/10	Make final decisions on lesson
7	10/17	Choose readings for class Hone final lesson plan
8	10/24	Dress rehearsal Hand out readings to group
9	10/31	Presentation

One of the ideas explored at various times in this meeting was the notion of studying <u>about</u> language versus actually <u>using it</u>:

<u>Excerpt 7</u>

Lisa: Do you think that um this writing to learn and learning to write that these they're not like one versus the other but I think those are issues in content ...
Adrea: I think it's an issue.
Lisa: Do you think it's an issue in content-based learning?
Adrea: Yeah because yeah go ahead Danielle
Danielle: In ESL learning? yeah.
Adrea: Definitely, it's like whether you're going to study the language whether you're going to work on adverbs or whether you're going to read about a trip to the zoo in which there are adverbs which you are going to soak in or produce
Nick: Or write about a trip that you took to the zoo.
Adrea: Exactly yeah I mean you know it's like what you [Lisa] were saying before using the language versus studying it in a vacuum you know like trying to dissect it
Lisa (high-pitched "witch's" voice): It's like it's like playing with the kitty cat instead of cruelly cutting it open.

In this short passage we have a rich discussion of an important question in content instruction: Should students study <u>about</u> language or should they spend time <u>using</u> it? The discussion exhibits many of the characteristics of collaboration that I will analyze in detail in Chapter 5. Notice the way group members build upon one another's ideas. Lisa starts this topic rolling by bringing up the issue of "writing to learn versus learning to write" and suggesting that this also connects to content teaching. Adrea agrees that it connects to content learning and then turns the floor over to Danielle.

Adrea then continues the discussion by contrasting two teaching approaches to content-- either "you're going to work on adverbs" or read an account about a trip to the zoo which contains adverbs. Nick builds upon that idea by suggesting that students could use adverbs by writing about an actual trip to the zoo. Adrea then connects this discussion back to a previous comment by Lisa about "using the language versus studying" or dissecting it. Lisa ends this section humorously by playing off of Adrea's comment on "dissection" to create a delightfully vivid simile which juxtaposes playing with language to slicing it apart in order to understand it.

The issues raised in this meeting come directly from the course readings in the texts by Enright and McCloskey (1988) and by Mohan (1986) and recapitulate a long-running discussion in the field of ESL (see Wilkins, 1976). This dialogue reveals a group of people who are listening to one another and are engaged in a serious attempt to <u>make sense</u> of their topic together.

<u>Meaning Negotiation</u>

One way that issues were discussed in this meeting (and subsequent ones) was for group members to ask for clarification or negotiate the meaning of a new vocabulary word or phrase. In this example from this meeting, the word "scaffolding" comes up:

Excerpt 8

Lisa: What are some other issues that have come up for you?
Adrea: I think the issue of scaffolding ...
Lisa: What is scaffolding?
Adrea: ... It's a metaphor ... well generally you are creating an environment in which um the student is able to reach just a little further than where they are ...
Danielle: and encouraging the person to use it for herself and then you can take away the scaffolding you don't need to prompt ... you are recognizing the students' learning level what the student already knows and building upon that ...

In this example, Lisa asks a general question to elicit key ideas of the course text. Adrea responds that "scaffolding" is an important idea and Lisa asks for the meaning of "scaffolding." What ensues is a rich discussion of the notion of supporting or scaffolding students. One of the ways that group members gain entrance into a field is to learn the discourse (e.g., vocabulary and conceptual network) which is used by members of that field. It is clear from this example that peer discussion can be a site for that type of instructional discourse and does not require the presence of a "teacher." We can also see one of the advantages of having a multilevel group of students working together: Students like Adrea who have been in the program longer can aid newcomers.

After this meeting, the small groups gathered to hear about the "Natural Approach" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) in a presentation by Jerri. In the week following, I read the group's journals and attempted to begin a real dialogue with my partners by commenting on what they had written about themselves and by writing about my own educational and

teaching experiences. I also checked with them about how they felt the group meetings were progressing. I ended the journals with a few lines about my interest in doing research in the Methods class. I also talked with Sachi on the telephone and agreed to drop off the transcript I had made of the third group meeting so that she could catch up on what she had missed.

Meeting Four

The fourth meeting again saw the whole group gathered together and would prove to be a pivotal one for the group although we would not know that until after the meeting was over. The meeting was divided into two distinct speech events.[10] The first speech event focused mainly on the type of content to organize the presentation around (returning to the suggestion raised by Lisa the previous week) and a question asked by Sachi about the type of ESL class and students the group was thinking of focusing on. The second speech event came toward the middle of the meeting when the group "brainstormed" ideas related to the content of mythology.

This meeting brought the topic of content squarely into the process of planning the presentation. They used this

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10. These speech events are analyzed in some detail in Chapter 5. Speech events are defined as "communicative routines" which are viewed as "distinct wholes, separate from other types of discourse, characterized by special rules of speech and nonverbal behavior" (Gumperz, 1972, p. 17).

meeting to generate content ideas and a variety of ideas surfaced: Adrea, who had clearly given the topic some thought during the week, suggested "mythology"; Nick discussed the possibility of doing something with "music"; Lisa threw out ideas for "patterns" (e.g., language, musical, mathematical) and "apples" (e.g., Johnny Appleseed story, nutrition, pollution, farming). The mythology idea was greeted enthusiastically and returned to again and again as it seemed to provide a cultural focus which could build on students' own experiences and could fit into a social studies curriculum which fit the agendas of Danielle and Adrea.

Sachi raised a question about the type of students this content would be used with. It is interesting to look at the way that she broaches her question to the group as it reveals some of the fundamentals of group interaction, particularly as they relate to her.

Excerpt 9

Sachi: Yeah but uh my question is maybe you can tell me two (.) two approaches/()
Danielle: /Yeah mmhuh
Sachi: something like that and uh: (.) if we could do both approach to the (.) same (.) area or do or do we have to concentrate on one (.) direction?
(1)
Lisa: /There's no have-to's about anything.
Nick: / ()
Lisa: Excuse me go ahead.=
Nick: =I was just going to ask what do you mean from two directions?=
Sachi: = um (.) say like you can do this as a regular social studies class but (.) but uh (.) but to help like ESL student /and
Lisa: /Right: mmhuh
Sachi: this conduct content ha then you can do it as an ESL class

108 **?:** mmhuh.
109 **Sachi:** but in the process of learning language

This excerpt reveals both the difficulties that Sachi as a second language speaker can, on occasion, have in making herself clear to other group members and the role that other group members can play in helping to clarify her speech. Sachi introduces a topic that will be discussed at some length in this meeting: What kinds of students and classes are to be the focus of the presentation? ESL or mainstream? Language classes or academic subject classes? Lisa's response, "There's no have-to's about anything," states a course norm that the small groups have the power to make their own choices in their small groups.[11] She then turns the floor over to Nick who asks Sachi to clarify her question and provides Sachi with another opportunity to raise her topic.

Nick's request for clarification provides us with data on the norms being enacted in this particular stretch of talk. He signals not only his own lack of understanding but also that Sachi's input is important. We can see in this instance of dialogue the broad construct of "collaboration" being constructed through a moment of interaction in which a classmate is positioned as a "resource."

Discourse is not merely a way to reflect norms which already exist but actually creates those communal norms through talk. It is obvious that the group is listening to

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11. Sachi viewed Lisa's response as "babying" her. See Chapter 6 for a complete discussion.

Sachi and is willing to work to understand her. However, despite the fact that she raises this question twice more in this meeting, ultimately her question goes unanswered. The group makes no decision. This raises central questions as to the voice that Sachi has in this meeting and is a topic that is analyzed in Chapter 5.

New vocabulary continues to trickle into the conversation as Danielle introduces the terms "BICS" and "CALP" from the Mohan text. These terms would be woven into the group discussion for the rest of the semester. I brought up the idea to the group of the importance of focusing not only on "content" for a hypothetical class of ESL students but also to consider a proper topic for the actual students they would be teaching in the presentation: their classmates. My comment came from my experiences with a past class in which I noticed that groups often forgot to consider the needs of their classmates as they focussed on planning a lesson geared toward a "fictional" class of second language learners. If an important part of the group experience was planning and then actually teaching a lesson, then I reasoned that weighing the needs of their "students" is an essential part of the process. The group agreed.

About halfway through the hour, the group decided to brainstorm ideas around the popular topic of mythology. The purpose of this "Brainstorm" was to generate ideas for the content of a demonstration lesson to be used in the presentation. The Brainstorm generated a web of ideas:

creation myths, religions, stereotypes, total destruction, the Big Bang, etc. and questions--Why are we here? Where do we come from? Why are things the way they are? The structure of the Brainstorm fostered the active participation of everyone with the notable exception of Sachi, who did not participate at all. It also created a different type of discussion in which the group got off task for the first time and joked around a bit.

The whole class presentation was once again led by Jerri and focussed upon principles of Whole Language teaching. The group watched a short video of a local elementary teacher teaching a science lesson to a group of young ESL students. The lesson modeled a very interactive and "hands-on" approach to content teaching.

Discussion of the First Four Meetings

These first four meetings provide a window into the interactional accomplishment of collaborative small group work. In order to reveal insights into that process, I will will analyze a set of interactional norms enacted by this group, and will then discuss the group's discussion of the question "What is content?"

Collaborative Interactional Norms. I identified the following collaborative norms as operating in this group during the first four meetings:

1. Stay on task.
2. Draw on personal experience.

3. Refer to knowledge gained from course texts.

4. Structure turns for others.

5. Listen to others.

6. Negotiate the meaning of others' speech.

7. Maintain positive social relations with one another.

8. Take full responsibility for the group task.

1. **Stay on task.** The group worked hard to begin the process of understanding a new topic and creating a presentation. A careful study of the transcripts reveals a group hard at work and "on task." A recurring pattern throughout these meetings leading up to the presentation was the norm of the group staying on task. The question is, what task were they on?

They were required both to research their topic--content-based learning in the second language classroom--and to create a presentation for their classmates on that topic. In these early meetings, they discussed both, but there was a greater focus on understanding the issues of content-based instruction and learning. They discussed theoretical ideas on language, learning, and teaching which directly related to content-based instruction and they began to generate ideas for their presentation. There was virtually no off-topic discussion of personal lives or issues in other aspects of the course unrelated to the group's topic.[12]

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12. This norm was firmly in place throughout the meetings leading up to the presentation. However, after the presentation, for the first time, there are examples of meeting time devoted to topics unrelated to course work, such as members' personal lives.

2 and 3. **Use knowledge from personal experience and course texts.** The primary kinds of knowledge that the group drew on in these discussions were twofold: Personal experience (of teaching and learning) and class readings. It was not uncommon for the group members to talk about the classes they were teaching or observing (or had taught or observed) and to note the connections that they were making between the group's interests and their own experiences. Sachi talked about learning English as a second language, Lisa drew on her extensive experiences of teaching music, Adrea spoke about ESL classes she taught in Europe, and so on.

One way this personal information was brought out was by group members asking for each other's opinions. Sachi was often solicited for her knowledge of language learning and cross-cultural perspectives. Nick was also invited to talk but he did not draw on personal experience. The other group members readily referred to their own lives to make their points.

The course texts were referred to frequently, with Mohan's text getting most of the attention. Several group members found it difficult to understand and not as helpful as they would have wished (although Sachi and Adrea seemed to like it better than other members). From the course texts, the vocabulary of the ESL field began to enter the conversation as group members talked about "BICS" and

"CALP," "scaffolding," "higher order thinking skills," "Whole Language," etc.

4. **Structure turns for others.** Group members structured turns of talk for one another in a variety of ways. They solicited opinions, asked for clarification of something said, and negotiated meaning of new terms. The collaborative aspects of the dialogue were in important ways created through these discursive moves.

5. **Listen to others.** Group members were clearly listening to one another in these meetings. They built upon one another's comments and critiqued each other's ideas. The discussions had a coherence that can only come from people paying close attention to each other's speech.

6. **Maintain positive social relations.** An important part of this collaborative effort would seem to be the avoidance of overt hostility among group members. Talking with group members and conversing through the journals made me aware that there was some tension between Lisa, Adrea, and Danielle. These three women talked by far the most in the meetings and they were usually the ones to introduce new ideas, make suggestions, evaluate the readings and one another's ideas, and argue among themselves. However, while all group members noted some tension between members at times, the group norm was for that to not be expressed in the meetings. Further, in a host of subtle ways, group members attempted to assuage overt threats to one another's face. This tension seemed to lessen the longer the group

worked together, although it never completely disappeared.[13]

What I find fascinating is not that this situation caused tensions between group members but the ways that the group was able to work well together despite these problems. For example, it was Adrea who raised the issue of compromise and the need to "accommodate" others' views in the third meeting. However, she was also struggling with her own participation in the group and was not enthralled with the concept of "group work" as she makes clear in her journal entry of October 4:

> I'm not 100% comfortable with the dynamics (in general) of group work. Theoretically, I think it's a terrific way to involve and draw on all students.... However, when I'm in a group I often feel torn between wanting to dominate (strong word!) when I think my view is right and wanting to withdraw because I don't feel comfortable negotiating.

Adrea, who had not had positive experiences with small group learning in two other education courses (one with Jerri's class in the previous semester), seemed to work especially hard to make this experience a success. However, in the meetings, you can see occasional points of tension between her and Lisa but you more commonly find efforts by both women not to antagonize one another.

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13. Cohen (1986) notes that cooperative group learning is challenging and stressful and organizing groups with no assigned roles can take a heavy emotional toll on group members. The role of facilitator has been introduced into the Methods course partly as a way to help groups manage conflict. However, one group in this year's class did have problems working together, but, unfortunately, they also had conflicts with their facilitator.

7. Negotiate meaning. As we saw in the transcripts, meaning negotiation is a part of the interactional pattern among group members. Meaning negotiation is reflective of the particular norms and values operating in the meeting. People do not simply initiate meaning negotiation every time that they have not understood someone. Crucially, meaning negotiation is triggered by the purpose of the speech event and the social relations among group members. These meetings are designed for group members to come to a common understanding of fundamental issues of their group topic (as well as communally plan a presentation). A primary purpose, then, in these meetings is to create a "semiotic space" (Lemke, 1989) for members to create meaning. In addition, the fact that the groups are designated to be collaborative and each group member is to be treated as a valued "resource" provides the rationale for meaning negotiation to take place.

I assume that constructing a common understanding of an utterance among group members is inherently problematic and that meaning is never finished, that is, the meaning of a stretch of talk could nearly always be negotiated further (Cronen et al., 1988). In essence, meaning negotiation allows the participants to maintain the definition of an on-going speech event. A person initiates (and others allow) negotiation if it is necessary for fulfilling the social roles, purposes, etc., of a particular speech event.

In Excerpt 8 when Lisa asked for the meaning of "scaffold," this marked not only the fact that she does not know the meaning of that term in this context but also that she is engaged in the type of social interaction in which it is appropriate to learn from peers and risk her own sense of "face" in signalling her ignorance. In addition, it also marks this discussion as centered around "sense making." The fact that group members negotiated the meaning of terms throughout these meetings is important evidence that they were enacting a type of collaborative dialogue.

8. Take responsibility for the task. The groups were free to create the type of presentation that they wanted, constrained only by the task designed by the instructor. As I showed in the first meeting, my role as facilitator was not to take a leading role in planning their presentation. And as Lisa said in the fourth meeting when responding to Sachi--"There is no have to's about anything." The group was free to plan the presentation as they wished. This norm is stated explicitly by Jerri when she visits the group in the seventh meeting.

What is Content? The group steadily pursued the question "What is content?" throughout these first meetings. They relied upon ideas gleaned from course texts and their own experiences. They discussed a series of questions that they felt were central to content, e.g., Where does it come from? Drawing upon Enright and McCloskey (1988), they discussed the idea that the students' own culture might be

an appropriate content for second language students. Citing Mohan (1986), they argued for content that would both resonate with the students' lives and be useful in other situations (e.g., academic subjects). Sachi, drawing upon her own learning of English, thought that organizing a class around students' own culture could be "boring."

The importance of teachers understanding students' lives and interests was of paramount importance to the group and the primary basis for choosing content for a second language class. They also recognized the importance of teaching about "American culture" and, of course, of academic subjects such as social studies and science.

In the third meeting, the group (without Sachi or me) continued to wrestle with issues surrounding content and the teaching of content. Relying heavily upon the Mohan text, the group grappled with the distinction between "experiential" and "expository" learning and the importance of focussing on the use of language as a tool of communication rather than on language analysis.

The fourth group meeting was the first time that the group began to turn its attention toward planning the presentation. The group nominated possible ideas for a suitable "content" (i.e., mythology, music, and patterns) for a fictional ESL class and then brainstormed ideas connected with mythology. In these activities, we can begin to see the ways that the task of planning the presentation caused the group to ground their discussions in the

concrete, rather than the more ephemeral abstractions of pure discussion. However, the group did not make any firm decisions about content in these meetings.

In sum, the group approached the topic of "content" by utilizing both resources from outside the group and from within. They used the Mohan and Enright texts to frame many of the crucial issues of content. They also used their own experiences as language teachers and learners and the diversity of their personal histories to attempt to understand what the basis for selecting content might be. Finally, the group began to plan the presentation and used that task to discuss specific examples of content.

Postscript

As I was walking downstairs after that fourth meeting, Sachi joined me and asked if she could read the transcripts of the meeting just finished. When I asked her why she wanted to do that, since she had just attended that meeting, she replied that she had "missed a lot" of the meeting and wanted to catch up.

If, as an educator, you take seriously the idea that the participation and comprehension of any group (or class) member is a group outcome and cannot be reduced solely to the characteristics of an individual, then Sachi's "problem" in understanding must be approached from a group perspective. In other words, my perspective on Sachi's statement that she had "missed a lot" was that the structure

of the group discourse was organized in such a way that she was prevented from fully participating. If we truly valued her voice, the group would find ways to ensure that she could comprehend the dialogue and participate. I told Sachi that her difficulty in understanding was a group problem and not just her fault. She seemed interested in this perspective.

That evening before and after the whole class session I talked with group members and told them about the "problem" stressing three points: (1) Sachi's difficulty in fully participating in the group discussions; (2) the importance of having Sachi participate in this group (i.e., non-native English speaker and Japanese); (3) the opportunity this experience has for helping the group to grapple with some of the basic issues of the course--creating an environment in which a multicultural group of learners can fully participate.

All group members responded very sympathetically to this point of view and were quite willing to discuss this issue in a special group session the following week. We agreed to meet forty-five minutes early the following week. It is to this "Process meeting" that we now turn.

Process Meeting

In this section, I explore a set of issues related to voice and collaboration by examining issues of participation in the group: individual versus group responsibility for

ensuring that everyone is heard, "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and strategies devised by the group for ensuring that members can fully participate. I draw primarily upon the "Process meeting" which was held the week following the fourth group meeting. This meeting provides opportunities to understand members' orientation toward their own and others' participation in their group. It provides members' views on the transcript from their previous meeting and has interesting educational implications for what it suggests about ways to support student efforts to work collaboratively.

I will also draw upon a meeting with Sachi the morning of the Process meeting which revealed some of her own views on participation. In utilizing these two data sources, I will analyze the content of the talk in order to gain insights into the group norms related to issues of participation.

It may be important to briefly discuss what I believe are the central educational issues at stake in this meeting. The issues of collaboration and voice are complex. It is clear that this course provides "semiotic space" (Lemke, 1989) for participants to gather together and create local meanings about a particular pedagogical topic. The small groups provide an opportunity for group members to construct their own "voices," outside of the hearing of "experts" (e.g., the instructor or author of texts).

This meeting provides an opportunity to better understand how group members talk about their own group process. Insights into this issue allow us to understand a series of issues surrounding collaborative learning: Who is responsible for ensuring that everyone can participate--the group or the individual? Is it legitimate for some members to participate less than others? What is meant by "participate"? What are concrete actions that educators can take in order to facilitate collaborative dialogue?

One of the educational issues that this meeting provides insight into is how to scaffold groups in their efforts to collaborate. This meeting was organized by me in my role as facilitator in order to discuss issues of participation, especially the participation of Sachi. The kinds of issues raised, how they are discussed, and their resolution all provide insights into this group's efforts to learn collaboratively. Group members report that this meeting was a significant and positive event in the evolution of the group.

"Resource" or "Stranger": A Private Meeting with Sachi

I met with Sachi the morning of October 10 for an hour in order to review the transcript from the fourth group meeting and discuss issues of concern to her about the group process. The idea to review the meeting transcripts had been suggested to me by Jerri and would prove to be an excellent way to focus on specific aspects of the meeting

discussion that Sachi found difficult. In this meeting, Sachi told me that for her discussion was more difficult to comprehend than a person lecturing.[14] This surprised me and I asked her if having the opportunity to ask questions did not help her comprehension and she replied that it was still easier to understand lectures such as in an astronomy course in which she has a strong background. A review of the transcripts of these early meetings reveals that there are no instances of Sachi actually asking for clarification, repetition or in any way trying to control the group discourse to aid comprehension.

She also noted that in the previous week's meeting one of the ideas she was trying to get the group to focus on got lost. In the discussion of what would make suitable content to focus on for a lesson for their presentation, Sachi had attempted to get the group to decide on the type of class and students this content would be used with (e.g., ESL class or mainstream). (See Chapter 5 for a detailed analysis.)

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14. Watanabe (1990) reports that Japanese university students often find group discussion to be difficult to understand and participate in. In her research, she identifies a variety of differences in the organization of small group discourse among all Japanese groups and all American groups: Differences in the ways that discussion is "framed," organization of arguments, and cultural values such as "collectivism versus individualism." Watanabe's research provides experimental evidence for differences between the organization of discussions between the two groups. My research provides insights into cross-cultural issues which arise in a multicultural group in a particular, institutionally situated setting.

I brought a transcript of the fourth group meeting and it proved to be a very useful resource for identifying specific sections of the group discussion that Sachi found difficult. We reviewed the transcript from the Brainstorm in the fourth group meeting and had an interesting discussion about the meaning of the word "mythology."

Sachi understood the meaning of the word but had a more narrow conception of it than some of the rest of the group. For example, at various points we included religion and science as examples of myths. Sachi thought myths were limited to old stories people tell about the gods and early life which no one really believes anymore. Further, for Sachi, who majored in astronomy as an undergraduate, the "Big Bang" was not a myth.

She told me that "when started web I got lost" which is certainly consistent with her level of participation in the Brainstorm. It now becomes clear that one of the reasons that she did not participate is that she had a rather different conception of mythology than the rest of the group. She also told me that "creation myth" was not clear to her and she had never divided myths up into categories before. In an interview many months later, Sachi told me that she had had no previous experience with brainstorming.

I believe that these components combined explain why she did not participate in that part of the meeting. The topic of mythology was unfamiliar to her and the structure

of the Brainstorm speech event was also new to her. Combined, these factors left her speechless.

Sachi also told me that she did not like it when Lisa solicited her opinion by asking her, "What do you think, Sachi?" When I told her that I thought Lisa's intentions had been to include her in the group, she said that she realized the intent but still did not like it. She felt that this direct question put too much focus on her. She elaborated in an interview by stating that she felt that this type of direct solicitation, which was reserved just for her, positioned her as a "child" and Lisa as the "parent."

I questioned her about turn taking and getting the floor and she indicated that this was not a big problem for if she really wanted to say something she could. Not surprisingly, she did find it very difficult to understand the section of the transcript in which group members were joking around. She could not follow references to "joints," "Reagan," "Pillsbury Doughboy," etc. This information seemed to be of a cultural type which she did not know.

Sachi then said that she really did not like being the only non-American in the group. (In her journal to me she also said that she missed a Taiwanese student who had been in the group the first week of class.) She told me that she did not want to be looked at as strange or an outsider. She felt that there had been too much emphasis in the course on what was different about individual students and suggested

that there were lots of elements in common among group members.

Sachi said that she felt comfortable with the group but would really like to focus more on ideas. As she noted in her journal, "... more serious problem with us is we have not 'discussed' much; we have 'talked' a lot, but we have not recognized the 'issues.'" Finally, Sachi said that she felt that meeting once a week was hard for her to keep up with what was happening.

Based upon our conversation, I suggested a few ideas to Sachi for improving her participation in the group. We discussed the ideas and we agreed on the following:

1. Stick to the book/articles and discuss the ideas. Plan ahead so that everybody will have read the same material.

2. Write information during class on the board. This might help everyone's comprehension.

3. Someone could be a secretary for the week and take notes and then write them up and distribute them for the next meeting.

4. Homework: Set an agenda for the next week so that everyone can be prepared.

Based upon our conversation, I selected two pages of transcript to discuss with the group. One page was drawn from the Brainstorm portion of the meeting and was selected to highlight group dialogue which required extensive knowledge of American culture in order to participate (e.g., jokes about politics). Also, this section of the transcript clearly showed me being an active participant in this

stretch of talk.[15] The second page was from an earlier part of the meeting in which Lisa solicited Sachi's participation and Sachi reiterates her interest in deciding the type of class for the lesson they are planning. This illustrates both the type of solicitation which Sachi did not like and the question she brought up that she felt was never resolved.[16]

Going into the meeting I had two principal goals: to construct a group discourse structure in which Sachi could be a full participant, and to not make the group feel that they are being accused of doing something wrong, but, rather, to create a positive group feeling to move forward. Fortunately, both happened!

Individual versus Group Responsibilities: The Process

Meeting Begins

The group came together 45 minutes early in order to discuss the group process and particularly, Sachi's

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15. This strategy of selecting a section of the transcript in which I am part of the "problem" was designed to shift the focus of talk away from individuals and any sense that I was accusing other group members of wrongdoing and toward a productive discussion of why a particular type of talk was difficult for Sachi and what could we do in the future to avoid the same problems.

16. At the time of the meeting, I had thought that Sachi's point was that her question had not been really "heard" by the group. However, a more careful examination of the transcript shows that the group did discuss this point thoroughly. I now believe that Sachi's dissatisfaction rested with the fact that the group never decided the issue. This incident has interesting implications for cross-cultural issues of voice and is analyzed in Chapter 5.

difficulties in participating in last week's meeting. This meeting was much different from previous meetings in that I took a much more active role in facilitating the meeting.[17] I started the meeting by telling the group that I had met with Sachi that morning and based upon that conversation had made copies of a couple of pages of transcripts from the previous week's meeting for the group to look over and discuss. I then handed out the transcripts to everyone. Group members laughed at the strangeness of seeing their speech transcribed. Lisa then offered an apology to Sachi.

Excerpt 10

Lisa: um (pause) I'm I'm sorry that you didn't understand and I think it would be helpful to me if you I know that it is probably well I imagine I don't know but I imagine that it might be hard for you to say wait a minute I didn't understand that. But um if there is a way that you could uh at least somehow let us know that there is something that you are not understanding ...

Sachi: well yeah that's true but um () you don't have to worry about you know you shouldn't joke or anything like that... And another thing with this is I tried to um connect what you think about mythology and what I think about mythology and I think they are completely different... I just ha waited till I till I I wanted to wait till I reached understandings but they ha never came. (Group laughter)

In this stretch of talk, we have both an apology by Lisa and a suggestion from her for Sachi to "somehow let us know that there is something that you are not understanding." Sachi seems to not directly respond to

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17. Not only did I ask group members to meet early but also during the meeting I structured topics, distributed the transcripts to group members, and played a very active role in the group discussion. This was atypical behavior for me in this group.

Lisa's suggestion but does tell the group that they should not worry about joking around. She also tells them her strategy for understanding in the Brainstorm on mythology: Wait until understanding comes.

The group now talks about differing ideas of mythology and the possibility of structuring the group's meetings so that it insured an opportunity for everyone to talk. Adrea makes a suggestion:

Excerpt 11

156 **Adrea:** ... I was wondering if maybe we all could think
157 of a way you know a new system of what if we just like
158 you couldn't say anything until it was your turn to
159 come around the circle ...

Interestingly, Sachi spoke against this plan--she considered it "rather unnatural"--and instead suggested that the group schedule specific topics for each week so that group members could be prepared to discuss these topics. Sachi also reiterated the point she had made to me that morning: that she felt capable of gaining the floor and saying what she wanted the group to hear.

We then turned to a discussion of the second page of transcript, in which I had noted that Sachi did not feel comfortable with being directly solicited by Lisa to talk. We also talked about the fact that Sachi kept bringing up a very important point, namely, what students the lesson we were planning would be targeted for.

I then introduced what I believed to be the central point of this meeting:

Excerpt 12

Francis: One of the um ideas I'm playing with in terms of small group work is that everybody has a say me I'm not looking for perfect balance in terms of everybody talks the same length or something. But one of things I'm looking for is that everybody has a chance to have some input in other words everybody is heard whether they say two sentences and people take that into account and that has some effect on the presentation or the ideas or somebody speaks a page you know that doesn't matter so much as the fact that other people hear what they have to say and take it and consider it and it becomes part of the discourse. So it's this idea I'm playing with this idea of voice what we're trying to do is to create a chance for people to have a voice in their uh: small groups but to have voice other people have to hear what the persons people say so whether it's one sentence or a paragraph or whatever people are really listening and trying to yeah how does this connect up and you see people playing with the ideas that are introduced so that um you know that balance between both listening and talking both
(pause)
how to do that is tricky ha

In lines 373-379, I state my own view of group work in the context of this course. I explicitly link group process with issues of "voice," by which I mean that "everybody has a say" and "other people hear what they have to say and take it and consider it and it becomes part of the discourse." I also argue that the actual amount of speaking a person engages in is not crucial but what is important is that everybody has a chance to be heard.

Adrea then suggests a different view of group process. She begins a stretch of talk in which individual responsibility in group work is highlighted.

Excerpt 13

Adrea: Well I think there's one thing that I think that's difficult cause like Sachi you had you had an objection to the way things are going but um but not being aggressive you didn't really push it right?

In this section, Adrea refers to Sachi's "objection to the way things are going" which I interpret as referring to Sachi's difficulties in understanding in last week's meeting. Next, she positions Sachi as "not being aggressive" and she illustrates the meaning of that by the phrase, "You didn't really push it right?" According to this account, being aggressive is pushing through an idea.

Adrea reinforces the importance of an individual pushing through an idea in group work in lines 396-398:

Excerpt 14

396 **Adrea:** yeah saying continue your line until your point
397 had been acknowledged by the person you are talking to
398 the one person who doesn't understand it or whatever
399 ...

Adrea clearly raises the issue of individual responsibility for pushing one's ideas through as contrasted with a group's responsibility to provide a space for that person.

Excerpt 15

399 **Adrea:** ... so I'm just wondering like whether the rest
400 of the group should be making up for one person not
401 pushing their idea all the way through or whether that
402 person should push the idea do you see what I'm saying?

Adrea is clearly constructing an argument for an individual's responsibility in getting themselves heard. She sets up a rather competitive model of group interaction with the phrase "push their idea." She also questions whether the group should have responsibility for helping an individual make sure their ideas are being heard. The phrase "making up for" in line 400 is particularly revealing

in that it suggests the question of whether it is fair to other group members that they should have to do the work of, in this case, Sachi. (It is interesting to look at other words which could be substituted in place of "making up for," such as "support" or "scaffold," both of which are terms used frequently in the course.) Rather than seeing Sachi's difficulties in terms of group process, Adrea positions them in terms of a failure on Sachi's part to push her "idea all the way through." Failure to speak up (or understand) is an individual responsibility rather than a group responsibility is a central message here. Finally, in line 402, Adrea can be seen soliciting agreement from group members for the argument that she is advancing.[18] In lines 403-405, Adrea constructs a brief disclaimer.

Excerpt 16

403 **Adrea:** Not that like you know group work should be
404 pushing of ideas but sometimes it is it's like you know
405 because people don't always listen because

This stretch of talk suggests that Adrea realizes that there is a group norm (course norm?) which perhaps is violated by viewing the group process as, in part, "pushing your ideas through." Hence, she notes the contrast between what "should" be and what "is." According to Adrea, group work should not be pushing your ideas through but sometimes

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18. Adrea's "Do you see what I'm saying" functions much like "y'know" in this conversation. Schiffrin (1987) argues that "y'know" is a statement of shared knowledge among speaker and hearers. Adrea's question functions to seek affirmation of communal agreement on the argument that she is advancing (i.e., the responsibility of individuals in this setting to "push their ideas all the way through").

it is necessary. In fact, there is evidence that Adrea's conception of the way that groups operate is, in fact, operating, at times, in this group. In meeting three, Lisa "pushed" for her suggestion that the group immediately choose a content for the presentation. That is, she continued to argue with multiple reasons for her idea even when it had met with opposition from Adrea and Danielle. She was rewarded for her efforts by getting her suggestion on to the agenda for the very next week. The reasons it is necessary to push ideas through is covered in the follow excerpt:

Excerpt 17

402 **Adrea:** it is it's like you know because people don't
403 always listen because you're already thinking about
404 what you're you know you already have your idea in your
405 head and someone says something that doesn't really go
406 along with your idea but you still have your idea in
407 your head so you might not be listening like 100% or
408 whatever....

The reason it is necessary to break the norm and push your idea through is that "people don't always listen" because you are preoccupied with your own thoughts and this prevents you from "listening like 100%."

Adrea seems aware that her own position in this talk is at least potentially outside the group norm, so it is necessary to engage in "face work"[19] in lines 408-410:

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19. Brown and Levinson (1987) use "positive face" to mean "the postive consistent self-image or personality (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" and "negative face" to mean "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction--i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (p. 61).

Excerpt 18

408 **Adrea:** This is how I would work in a group anyway I
409 don't know maybe you people are better people than I am
410 but
411 (Group laughter)

In these lines, she clearly identifies herself with the content of her previous talk and suggests that because she holds these positions, others may think they "are better people" than she. Again, this reinforces the sense that she is positioning herself outside of a group norm. The question is what is the group norm which she is challenging? Since her main point seems to be that individuals must, at least at times, take the initiative and push their ideas until they are heard, the group norm implicitly is that the group is responsible for ensuring that everyone is heard.

The face work of Adrea in lines 408-410 is met with laughter, which seems to function as a solidarity move by other group members. It seems to convey the message: We do not think we are better people than you. Adrea seems to interpret the laughter as encouragement that she is on the right track in lines 412-414:

Excerpt 19

412 **Adrea:** ... so what I'm wondering is is if how my view
413 of how things sometimes work with people having ideas
414 and objections and stuff if that's true then ...

Here Adrea is simply suggesting that if her line of thought is "how things sometimes work," and her group "positive face" is not in jeopardy, then she has a question:

Excerpt 20

414 **Adrea:** ... does this mean that Sachi has to lean over
415 on the table and say (pounding on the table with her
416 hand) "but you got to listen to what I'm saying I'm
417 saying that right now we have to define who our
418 audience is here and now" ...

Adrea illustrates her point of individuals' responsibility in group process by suggesting that Sachi should pound on the table and tell others "you have got to listen."

Adrea then contrasts that approach with another, in lines 418-420:

Excerpt 21

418 **Adrea:** ... or do we all say "All right now now Sachi
419 has an objection." You know what I mean? Who puts on
420 the brakes when something needs to be stopped? ...

The contrast Adrea makes is between the individual with the idea pushing her own ideas versus another member of the group picking up on the idea and seeing that it is heard by others. The word choice and intonation of lines 418-420 suggest a parent talking to a child. Adrea's "You know what I mean?" in line 419 is an appeal to both shared knowledge among group members that the world is the way that Adrea suggests and orients hearers to the argument that she is advancing (see Schiffrin, 1987). In other words, she uses her question in line 419 to appeal to a pool of knowledge about the world shared by group members in order to align the group to her argument.

Adrea finishes this section with a question, in lines 419-420. Her question is again oriented toward who is

responsible for ensuring that an idea is heard--group or individual. It is quite clear that Adrea believes that an individual has a great deal of the responsibility for getting themselves heard during a group meeting. However, her thesis is challenged by me:

Excerpt 22

421 **Francis:** ( ) pushing through an idea is a kind of
422 American discourse pattern.
423 **Adrea:** I'm very American.

I position Adrea's ideas on an individual's responsibility in group work as an "American discourse pattern" and implicitly as one of many possible patterns. Adrea rejoins that she is "very American" which quite likely could be face work for what she perceives as a threat to her.

In line 423, I ask a rhetorical question which is oriented toward framing "Adrea's" previous talk in terms of a single discourse pattern (and building upon line 421, an American pattern) and contrasting that to the needs of a multicultural group like the very group which is present.

Excerpt 23

423 **Francis:** Are we only going to allow one discourse
424 pattern in a multicultural classroom or in a
425 multicultural group?

Adrea's response is interesting. Based upon the challenge which I present to her and the argument that she has developed, coupled with her mildly combative rejoinder in line 422, we might expect that she would defend her thesis. She does not. Instead, she concedes the point:

Excerpt 24

426 **Adrea:** That's a good point too.

Why does she do this? A couple of possible explanations come to mind. First, as the group facilitator, I may have greater social standing within the course and she decides not to challenge me here.[20] Second, when I frame her talk of "pushing your idea through" as an "American discourse pattern," I am implicitly contrasting her ideas to the values of this course (and the program's orientation)--a stated respect for multicultural education. Perhaps, the weight of these ideas, framed within this particular context prove too heavy to buck and she is not willing to "push her ideas through." I continue with my drive to state (and perhaps set) the norm for this group's interaction as accommodating more than one way of participating.

Excerpt 25

427 **Francis:** ... so hopefully we're not we are going to
428 try to create something that's different than just one
429 group's model or and not everyone is going to be
430 comfortable with pushing through their idea all the
431 time you have to/
432 **Adrea:** /right

In lines 427-432, I am continuing that process of negotiating a possible norm of group participation and Adrea, in line 432, provides support for that position.

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20. I have observed that facilitators occupy an intermediate position in the course hierarchy with Jerri, the course instructor, at the top, facilitators next, and students at the bottom.

Adrea's talk of an individual's responsibility to "push their idea through" if they want to be heard is <u>not</u> the group norm. I base this assessment on three factors: (1) Adrea orients through her own talk toward a different norm for group interaction as she contrasts what "should be" and what "is." (2) Without any challenge (at least on tape) to her ideas, Adrea engages in face work when she states that "maybe you are better people than I am"; this suggests that she is aware that she is opening herself up to a negative evaluation based upon a different group or course norm and she is attempting to maintain her own positive face. (3) When I challenge Adrea's ideas and frame them as mono-cultural, she quickly backs down; she is not able to sustain her own position when it is framed in terms of cultural patterns.

However, the group discourse, at times, does seem to bear out Adrea's position, as we have seen with Lisa in the third group meeting. In other words, when I review the transcripts of the group meetings, there are times when group members hold their ground and argue for their ideas and attempt to "push through their ideas." That is, they (metaphorically) bang on the table and make sure that their position is given a full hearing.

So, what is the actual norm of this group anyway? I return to Carbaugh's (1990) discussion of norms:

> Note that normative rules involve explicit standards of appropriateness, and of evaluation, which are central criteria in discovering and specifying such rules. It is <u>what should be done, rather than what is</u>, that

> sustains a normative analysis of communication rules. (p. 141, emphasis added)

My analysis suggests that even as we disagreed and negotiated, Adrea and I were orienting toward the following norm: In conversation, group members should act to ensure that everyone is heard. However, this norm was being contested by Adrea through this stretch of talk. She was proposing a norm along these lines: In collaborative group meetings, individual group members should be responsible for ensuring that their own ideas are heard.

Our basic argument was over whether the norm for pushing through an idea is functional within this group, in this context. I came into this meeting prepared to negotiate group norms that would allow all group members to have a voice, including Sachi. I believed that Adrea's suggestion that Sachi would have to, on occasion, bang on the table and push her ideas through in order to be heard was a norm that would result in her silence. I did not believe that she would be comfortable doing that. Much the same could be said for Nick. In other words, what I was objecting to was the fact that I believed such a norm was dysfunctional for members of this group.

It is important to note here that Adrea is a complicated person who (like the rest of us) is quite capable of holding two (or perhaps more) conflicting opinions simultaneously. She had noted in her journal that in groups,

> I often feel torn between wanting to dominate (strong word!) when I think my view is right and wanting to withdraw because I don't feel comfortable negotiating.

We have also seen her taking the lead in the second meeting in suggesting the need for compromise among group members. Interestingly, at the end of this term, Adrea and a classmate in Jerri's "Theories of Communication" course wrote an insightful paper on "Home and School Discourses" in which they reviewed the educational literature which documents the incompatibility between languages (and dialects) spoken by minority students at home and the academic discourse used in school. They concluded that paper with the words,

> We feel that the academic discourse must be remade so that one group's ways of making meaning, thinking, acting, believing, etc. are no longer defined as natural or normal but as one aspect of the multi-cultural academic Discourse.

The discussion between Adrea and me captures one way that a dominant discourse can be invoked to persuade another. By invoking the dominant institutional discourse of the School of Education I am able to "win" the argument. This dominant discourse is characterized by a language and belief system that promotes multiculturalism, which in this setting refers to both a respect for "cultural diversity" in our society and a belief that educators must create educational systems that support learning for all students.

This privileged discourse or "genre" in this institutional setting has been internalized by both Adrea and me. What is so fascinating about this encounter is the

way that one of the transcendent privileged discourses in American life "individual responsibility" is successfully challenged in this particular setting by a locally privileged discourse of "multiculturalism" (Wertsch, 1991). Further, it is clearly not the case that I was able to persuade Adrea, to the extent that I did--through, say, rational arguments--to back down from her articulated position. Rather, I <u>invoked</u> a discourse which in this institutional setting was difficult for her to resist, not because resistance would have tangible negative consequences (e.g., impact on her course grade) but because it was also part of her own consciousness.

She could hear my argument precisely because it was also her own argument. As Wertsch notes,

> The process of socialization is obviously not one of replacing one speech genre with another; instead it is one of differentiating and adding speech genres. (p. 130)

Adrea and I had both internalized the "individual responsibility" and the "multicultural" speech genres or discourses. However, in this setting, as we have seen, they were not equally privileged.

I now turn to another local norm that was being contested by Nick and Sachi--active participation in the group meetings.

<u>Nick and Sachi: Legitimate Peripheral Participants</u>

Both Nick and Sachi discussed their own roles in the group and how they viewed issues of group process. The

following series of excerpts are analyzed in terms of how the speakers were orienting themselves toward particular norms of group participation. Both speakers were particularly interested in structuring their talk so that they positioned themselves outside what they claimed to be local norms for talk and yet attempted to maintain a positive social identity despite the fact that they were outside of this norm. This provides us with insights into these local norms of participation.

Nick was reacting to another group member's suggestions for assigning particular roles to group members in order to improve the group process (e.g., reporter, facilitator, timekeeper, vibes watcher). In lines 495-498, Nick begins to address his own ideas about these suggestions:

Excerpt 26

495 **Nick:** ... thinking about what she [the instructor]
496 said earlier about just keeping things kind of natural
497 and not these are my words I guess not putting too many
498 structures on on our process ...

In this bit of talk, Nick states that he would not favor using a variety of assigned roles in the group and that he prefers keeping things "natural" and unstructured. These words seem to mean that he favors not assigning new roles such as timekeeper or group leader to group members. Nick then describes himself and his own role in the group:

Excerpt 27

498 **Nick:** ... I tend to be a rather shy quiet person and
499 um uh it's not that I'm not listening but um I'm pretty
500 new to all of this and new to group work so I may not
501 always have a whole lot to say....

In these lines, Nick describes his own typical performance in the group work and two rationales for that performance. Nick says that he tends "to be a rather shy quiet person" and that he is "pretty new to all of this and new to group work." By "all of this," he is referring to the field of second language teaching and perhaps content-based learning in second language teaching. He also notes, "... so I may not always have a whole lot to say." The use of the conjunction "so" suggests that his personal characteristics and lack of experience are the <u>reasons</u> that he is is giving for not talking a lot during the meetings.

He goes on to give what appears to be a clear example of face work:

<u>Excerpt 28</u>

501 **Nick:** ... um I don't want you to interpret that that
502 ah: you know I'm bored with it or not listening or
503 something like that it's I'm processing everything and
504 trying to come up with some some ideas of my own to
505 contribute ...

In this stretch of talk, Nick notes the negative social identity which could be attributed to his lack of talk in the group meeting--"bored" and "not listening"--but argues against those interpretations by noting that he is "processing everything and trying to come up with some some ideas of my own to contribute": that in fact he is an engaged member of the group, albeit a quiet one.

It is important for this analysis that we see that Nick is orienting himself toward a <u>group norm of active participation</u> and that he recognizes that he is outside of

that norm. Active participation would include frequent turns of talk and contributing ideas of one's own. Nick has indeed talked less than many of the other group members. There is a component of face work in this talk as Nick asks group members not to read his less than normal participation in the group as evidence of his being "bored" or "not listening."

In lines 506-507, he commits himself to talking in the group when he feels that he has "something to say." He also notes that his speaking will continue to be less than other members:

Excerpt 29

506 **Nick:** ... I mean I'll speak up when I have something
507 to say um but it may not be as often as you folks ha.

Nick has noted a group norm toward active participation through talk. He has placed himself outside that norm for he recognizes that he is talking less than others. And finally, he has provided a rationale for his behavior in terms of both personality characteristics of being shy and quiet and his lack of experience with the topic of the group. He has asked the group not to judge him negatively and committed himself to talking when he thinks he has something to say. This may mean that he talks less than the group norm but at a level with which he is personally satisfied.

Interestingly, Nick's talk provides a slot for Sachi to build upon. Nick's message provides a thematic link to Sachi's own similar but distinct message. Beginning with

line 507, Sachi piggybacks onto the topic introduced by Nick:

Excerpt 30

508 **Sachi:** You You sounded like a Japanese ha
509 (Group laughs)

Sachi immediately follows Nick's talk by identifying with him with the words "You you sound like a Japanese ha." At six feet five and of European stock, Nick seems an unlikely person to be "Japanese" (which explains the group's laughter). She then provides information on what aspects of Nick's talk is similar:

Excerpt 31

510 **Sachi:** it's exactly what we I mean in general we feel
511 I mean if ah: like I don't know like this culture like
512 if you don't speak they consider you a ha dumb
513 (group laughs)
514 You're not thinking anything something like that ...

Sachi, like Nick, orients herself toward a norm of group interaction (not necessarily this particular group's norm) by noting that failure to speak in the culture of the United States marks a person as being "dumb" (i.e., stupid). Implicitly, she is stating that the cultural norm in the United States is toward a higher degree of talk in group situations than is the norm for Japanese people in general and Sachi in particular.

Sachi positions herself outside this norm by first identifying herself with Nick and his own orientation of being outside the group norm. Second, Sachi identifies herself as Japanese with the pronoun "we" in line 510. The pronoun "they" in line 512 refers to Americans (more about

this later). Sachi then tells the group what the Japanese norm for group participation is:

Excerpt 32

515 **Sachi:** but we we really think um we think and think
516 and think and then a talk just a little bit it's very
517 different

In these lines, Sachi clearly identifies silence with thinking rather than being "dumb" (or for Nick, being bored or not listening). Here we can see Sachi both positioning herself outside the group norms and doing face work to make silence a positive social behavior. Integral to this face work is her positioning herself as a Japanese person and hence outside American cultural norms.

There are a number of interesting points here. First, unlike Nick, who describes his being outside the norm in terms of personality and lack of experience with the group topic, Sachi describes herself as outside these norms by referring to a cultural identity--Japanese (and implicitly not American).[21]

Both Nick and Sachi are defending themselves from negative evaluations from other group members due to the fact that they do not adhere to what they perceive to be

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21. Adrea draws similar conclusions concerning Nick and Sachi's discussion of their level of participation and rationales for these levels in notes she took during the meeting and distributed the following week:

> [Sachi and Nick] preferred to participate less frequently (verbally) than Danielle, Adrea or Lisa. Sachi cited cultural and Nick personality reasons for being "quiet." Nick also felt that his relative inexperience in the field gave him less to contribute.

group norms. Sachi skillfully uses pronouns to both position herself as Japanese and not American and to diminish the potentially negative impact of her characterization of American culture; she uses the pronoun "they" for Americans rather than the more pointed "you," which would highlight the cultural identity of the other group members and would have perhaps been more accusatory.

Finally, Lisa asks Sachi about the normative behavior of Japanese during meetings:

Excerpt 33

518 **Lisa:** What happens in Japanese group meetings?=
519 **Sachi:** =quiet ha
520 (Group laughs)

Sachi responds to Lisa's question (without missing a beat) with what is taken by the group to be a hilarious comment. What is interesting about this interchange is both the clear signal that Sachi provides as to her own cultural orientation toward group process and the laughter which is present throughout the whole excerpt with Sachi. In an interview, Sachi made it very clear that she meant her response to Lisa's question to be a "joke."

What is the function of all of the laughter surrounding Sachi's talk? I would like to suggest that much of the laughter functions in terms of social identity and group relations. The laughter at line 513, Excerpt 31, suggests group solidarity. Both Sachi and the other group members laugh at the notion of silence on the part of a group member being interpreted as that person being "dumb" Sachi has

been the quietest member of the group up to this point in the semester. (Perhaps it is a particularly ridiculous notion for group members when that notion is applied to Sachi who is perceived by group members as an intelligent woman). A group solidarity move may be necessary at this juncture because of the potentially divisive nature of the connection between silence and intelligence.

The group laughter at line 520, Excerpt 33, is more difficult to assess. Sachi's response to the question by Lisa is a rather obvious extension of the point that Sachi has been making in this talk, namely, that the group norm for participation at meetings in Japan is for much less talk than in the United States. Sachi's succinct one word answer, "Quiet," spoken without hesitation, is both obvious (based upon her previous remarks) and contrastive to the current norms of the group. This would seem to be enough to warrant loud and sustained laughter from the group. The fact that everyone laughs suggests a solidarity function as group members use laughter to successfully achieve synchronicity in their actions (Jefferson, 1979).

In summary, Sachi has also oriented herself toward a group norm of active participation and placed herself outside this norm based upon her Japanese cultural background. She has noted the negative evaluation which silence has in the culture of the United States and contrasts that with viewing silence positively in terms of

thinking. She frames these divergent views in terms of cultural assumptions.

It is important to recognize that collaborative group work as it is structured in this course is a cultural construct which is based upon a set of values and norms, a topic that I return to in Chapter 6. Sachi helps us to understand some aspects of this by showing us how "silence" and "talk" are interpreted from contrasting cultural systems. In the meetings, Sachi and Nick speak less than other group members. Both Nick and Sachi use this Process meeting to attempt to construct a positive face within the group despite being outside of the group norm for active participation. In essence, they are positioning themselves as being legitimate peripheral participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Both Nick and Sachi have stated that when they have something to say they can and will gain the floor and speak and both provide rationales for their lesser participation.

Conclusion of Meeting

The group went on to discuss the possibility of using a secretary to take notes and Adrea noted that she had already been taking notes and was willing to continue as secretary for this evening. She then provided this summary of the process meeting:

Excerpt 34

581 **Adrea:** So I have dialogue problems joking with
582 cultural content and then it would be good to know the
583 topics in advance, um one idea was typing up the

584 minutes and () having that rotating. Another idea was
585 rotating moderator and using the board.

The group quickly decided to put an agenda on the blackboard, have one group member keep track of time in order to keep the group on schedule and use Adrea as the secretary for this evening's group meeting. They rejected the idea of a moderator.

Discussion of the Process Meeting

This meeting was significant in a number of ways. Group members reported that this meeting helped the group work collaboratively in subsequent meetings. In concrete terms, the group instituted the new role of "secretary," whose job was to take notes in the meetings and distribute them at the next group meeting, a practice the group used for the remaining meetings leading up to the presentation. This was designed to help the group "keep on track" and provide a summary of key ideas for each meeting which could then be built upon in subsequent meetings. The group also chose to set an agenda for the following week at the end of each meeting so that everyone would know what was going to be discussed and could prepare for those topics.

In ways that are not completely clear to me, group members also attributed to this meeting a change in the way that the group as a whole worked together. The tensions evident among group members in the early meetings dissipated. In addition, the group seemed more dedicated than ever to the idea of working collaboratively. I suspect

that the process of reflecting on the actual discourse of the group, the discussions and arguments about discourse norms, and the changes the group made in the way they would run their meetings (e.g., use of a reporter, creating an agenda, etc.) all had the effect of making the participants more aware of issues of voice and participation. This resulted in group members making greater efforts to collaborate. As Sachi noted in her final journal entry to me:

> Also I feel that meeting [process meeting] was one of two "turning points" in the course of our group process; we really started to "listen" to each other.

In the analysis of the transcript which I have presented, two additional "norms" operating in this group have been uncovered:

9. Participate actively in group meetings.
10. Take responsiblity for the participation of other group members.

9. <u>Participate actively</u>. Group members have oriented toward a norm of active participation. Dialogue among participants is integral to the structure of this collaborative, task-based course. Words such as "group work," "collaboration," and "brainstorm," and viewing students as "resources" are all oriented toward creating the social conditions under which students interact in this setting. Dialogue among peers is the predominant form of interaction sanctioned in this educational setting. As we have seen in this meeting, Sachi and Nick have attempted to negotiate roles that legitimize their less than active

participation in the group meetings. Nevertheless, the norm is still prevailing. However, a kind of counter-discourse has been introduced into the group which, at least in this meeting, calls into question what constitutes sufficiently "active participation."

10. Take responsibility other members' participation. The discussion between Adrea and me in this meeting centered around who was responsible for ensuring that a person (e.g., Sachi) had a voice in the group meetings. Adrea argued for an individual's responsibility and I argued for group responsibility. In the group meetings, both before this one and after, it is clear that group members consistently structured opportunities for Sachi to speak. However, it is also true that Sachi took a more active role in many of the meetings after this. I believe that the group norm is toward group responsibility for the participation of group members. Jerri Willett and Mary Jeannot (1993) have identified a dominant pattern of talk in this course which they call a "language of care" which is oriented toward "comfort, healing, and solidarity" (p. 14). This norm is part of that language.

Conclusion

There are a number of tensions evident within this group: Individual versus group responsibility; active participation versus legitimate peripheral participation; and finally, Sachi being valued as a "resource" versus being

positioned by the group as "alien." The last of these tensions receives greater analysis in Chapter 6. However, it is important that we understand that from Sachi's point of view, acts such as solicitations by group members which are meant to be inclusive are felt to be alienating largely because they position her as "strange" or place her in a "child's" role.

Finally, it is important to note that the fact that this meeting was held at all is strong evidence of the value attached to issues of participation by group members. The group was willing to come to class early simply to discuss ways to make the group more inclusive. This particular speech event, the Process meeting, allowed group members to voice and negotiate their views on how they wanted to work together. The use of the transcript of the fourth group meeting provided a type of richly contextualized data which grounded the discussion in the realities of this particular group interacting together. Many of the group members have repeatedly referred back to the transcripts as a valuable part of this process. It is my belief that the meeting in conjunction with the course norms created the conditions for the group to orient toward a value of, as Sachi wrote, "listening" to one another.

Struggle to Learn and Decide:
Meetings Five, Six, and Seven

The third period of meetings, starting just over a month before the group presentation, found the group struggling to master their topic--content-based learning--and create a lesson plan for their presentation. The time of the presentation was growing steadily nearer but the group was unable to make any real headway in completing the task, although they did struggle mightily.

The emotional component of the group dynamics, from my own personal experience and my observations of the group, was a bit like a tightening vise--as the presentation came closer and closer--the pressure grew more and more intense. However, the pressure was off-set in some ways by the gains the group made in working together. In fact, how this group was able to overcome some of its problems in collaborating is an important part of this story.

Meeting Five

The group continued to meet immediately after the Process meeting (although I had to attend a facilitators' meeting). According to reports by group members, this meeting was quite animated and Sachi played a more active role than she had previously. Adrea volunteered to be the "secretary" for the night. A central focus of discussion was the question "What is content?" The following is a portion of Adrea's notes on that subject.

> Lisa described an ESL class she observed with two Russian students with very little English and one Vietnamese woman who had been here for two years. The point of her story was "What is content? What to prioritize to teach kids? Why not use their stories as content?" Nick said that he had had a similar experience with irrelevant content and thought their lives should be the focus of content.[22] Sachi said the cultural aspect is a good starting point for a class, but that it became really boring if there weren't more to the class than sharing cultural stories and information. Danielle said teachers should find out the students' interests. Sachi said jumping from topic to topic is not content. Lisa asked again, "What is content?" Danielle said a social studies or ESL curriculum that focussed on useful and meaningful things. Adrea said it depends on the mental approach -- an exercise could be something meaningful and useful, but used as a drill for language wouldn't be real content.

It is clear from these notes that the group is still wrestling with questions of content. The group has a strong orientation toward using their students' own lives as suitable content in a language class. While they continued to discuss the idea that many students needed academic content in order to succeed at school, the group turned most of its attention and passion on content which was taken from students' interests and cultures. However, Sachi consistently warned members that students' home cultures were not a promising basis for extended language study. It may very well be that the text by Enright and McCloskey which championed this approach, coupled with the general tenets of Whole Language, provided the foundation for these ideas. This topic would continue to be discussed for several more weeks.

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22. This is a rare example of Nick using personal experience as the basis for a comment in a group meeting.

In the meeting, Sachi is reported to have played a more active role than in previous meetings. It is clear, however, that this form of collaborative group work is a strain on her as the journal entry of October 9 makes clear:

> Thursdays are busy days for me this semester; I start to work at 8:30 in the morning and continue working without a break. By 6:00, I am exhausted. I do not feel like talking at all, especially in English. That Thursday when we had a discussion on "group discussion" was particularly exhausting. I was hoping that you would speak for me,[23] but that did not happen. Once started to talk, I could not stop... generally speaking, I felt bad about myself going from one extreme (being so "quiet") to the other (being "annoying").

This entry vividly captures the struggle that is a part of group work for Sachi. Two points of this journal entry seem particularly salient. First, speaking English can be "exhausting" and this can make group discussion difficult for her. Second, the strain of attempting to balance the "active participation" norm of the group with her own comfort level of participation is clearly evident. While other group members I checked with did not recall Sachi talking too much or being "annoying" in that meeting, clearly she felt that way. Just as Adrea struggles with wanting to either "dominate" her group or "withdraw," Sachi wrestles with maintaining a balance between conforming to

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23. In subsequent journal entries I asked Sachi why she expected me to "speak for her" when I thought the point of the Process meeting was to ensure that she could speak for herself. She replied that she did not expect me to really speak for her but simply hoped that I would tell "what had happened at the morning meeting" between her and me.

the group norm for participation and her own inner sense of what is the proper amount for her to talk in this situation.

The group continued to implement their more serious attempts to gain order into their process. They set the following agenda for the next week's meeting:

Agenda for October 10

Reporting on outside articles or books
Applying Mohan
Creating a general plan for workshop

The whole class presentation that week was given by two local elementary ESL teachers on teaching beginning literacy to second language speakers.

Meeting Six

In the sixth class meeting, the group met half an hour early in order to have more time to work together. Early on in the meeting, Lisa and Adrea identified their own concerns about the topic of content:

Excerpt 35

Lisa: ... I don't know if this is too ridiculous but talking about what is content.
Adrea: I think that this that is maybe what my problem with Mohan is I feel like we haven't decided like what is content and and and um what's the whole point? You know what I mean? I feel like we're talking about a general plan for our workshop and I feel just don't feel we have what we're going to tell them. Do you know what I mean? We need to decide what our message is

Three weeks (and counting) until the presentation and the group still did not have a handle on the nature of content, what they wanted to tell their classmates about their topic, or a concrete plan for their presentation.

They used this meeting to discuss the additional articles they had read on content-based instruction and monitor these articles for insights into questions they had about content.

Nick and I both brought up the idea that perhaps what we really want to know is not only what is proper content but also approaches to teaching content to second language students. The discussion of the articles organizes much of the meeting time as each group member discusses his or her "outside" article with other group members asking questions about the teaching approach used in the article, content focus, etc. The notes taken by Danielle give a clear sense of the types of questions the group was focused on and some of their answers:

What is content?

1. The doing, actual experience of an activity, rather than just discussing theory. Doing an activity through the medium of language. (Sachi's book)

2. In the act of doing through language, one also acquires other skills pertaining to the content. (Sachi's book)

3. Emphasis on communication and dialogue. (Sachi's book)

4. Cultural background is needed to interpret content in some areas, like social sciences. (Adrea)

5. Language comes out of the experience without being the whole experience. (Lisa)

6. The actual content can be anything (Lisa)

7. There is a spectrum regarding universality of content. Subjects such as science and math are universal, whereas the content of social studies will vary globally [across cultures]. (Sachi)

8. Music and art usually aren't considered for ESL due to being broad based, but in a way they do vary between

cultures. Music and art won't have universal interpretation. (Lisa)

9. Content and Grammar: a book of random essays of varied subjects that serve to put the following grammar drills in a content [This approach does not constitute "content-based instruction"]. (Lisa's book Mosaic)

Why use content?

1. To interpret/understand culture. (Francis)

2. To build social/cultural foundation. (Nick)

3. To achieve subject matter learning before having to perfect language learning. (Nick)

4. Its a less dogmatic approach to teaching English. (Nick's article)

The group realized that they were not going to come up with "the definition" of content for the presentation, as the following discussion illustrates:

Excerpt 36

600 **Danielle:** I think that they're all connected....
601 There's different kinds of content and different things
602 that you get out of a content. Like through this
603 content you can get grammar I mean I think what Lisa
604 was talking about before was talking about content and
605 grammar book wasn't really content the way I mean the
606 way I think of it and I think the way we've been
607 discussing it. That it wasn't meaningful and it wasn't
608 real so
609 **Adrea:** But that's one definition of content that sort
610 of the whole linguistic type Jerri Willett definition
611 of content but that's not the definition of content.

Danielle links her view of content with the idea that it must be "meaningful" and "real," that is, meaningful to students and authentic examples of the target language. Adrea argues that Danielle's point of view is just one view of content, which is consistent with the perspective taken in the course by Jerri and what Adrea calls "whole

linguistic," by which I assume she means "Whole Language" approach.

The group continued to wrestle with staying on task and at times members even disagreed on whether what they were discussing was "on" or "off" task. One thing was clear at this point: The group had no clear procedure for deciding much of anything. There were mixed reactions to this discussion, as some group members felt that it was useful to discuss the articles and issues they raised while others felt that the conversation wandered and did not have a tight enough focus, that is, it did not make concrete advancement toward finalizing plans for the presentation.

There were only two Thursday meetings left before the presentation and the group was entirely without a concrete plan for it. The group was frustrated with the difficulty they were having with staying on a particular topic and really coming to terms with it. You could feel the tension begin to mount now that the presentations was looming.

From my own point of view this was one of the richer group meetings as the group really tried to explore ideas related to content and content-based instruction. The format allowed everyone to have a chance to talk about the article they read and comment on others' articles. Group members were clearly listening to one another and building on each other's ideas but still nothing is getting <u>decided</u>.

The difficulty the group had in making real progress in planning a presentation was evident in Danielle's journal entry of October 13:

> I think last week was ok--I feel a bit scattered for a while it seemed unfocused and I tried to pull it together a couple of times and it just didn't work. Adrea told me that she felt the same way, but she said that she thinks it has to do with the different ways people learn, which I think is true. We prefer a more methodical approach, taking one bit at a time, whereas others may prefer to look at the whole picture.

Danielle's journal captures her own (and Adrea's) difficulties with the lack of "focus" in this meeting. Danielle recounts her own unsuccessful attempts to focus the group, a role that she frequently took on. She attributes these difficulties to "different ways that people learn." She prefers a "methodological" approach which takes "one bit at a time," whereas others may prefer to "look at the whole picture."

While Danielle attributes this lack of "focus" in the group discussions to learning styles, I wonder if it is a product of the collaborative process, itself. The lack of sustained focus on a particular topic until some communal insight has been gained or a decision is made as to its place in the presentation is, I believe, the source of the frustrations with the group meetings. From my perspective, the difficulty lies not in the ability of the group to choose a subject and discuss it at some length. In this meeting, the group spent a long time discussing "What is content?" The problem lies in the structure of the group discourse, which does not allow for some resolution of an

issue. The group found it difficult to identify an issue, pull their collective resources together, and wrestle with the issue until it was resolved. As we will see in the final group of meetings, the ability of the group to do that is greatly enhanced by being forced to make decisions under the presentation deadline.

Agenda for Meeting Seven

Choose readings for the class
General plan for the presentation
More Mohan?

This is the first night of the small group presentations. The Problem Posing group is on!

Meeting Seven

The seventh meeting, again meeting half an hour early, focused primarily on selecting the readings to be handed out the next week to the class[24] and brainstorming the goals for the presentation. Danielle noted that the other group presentations were providing a foundation that they could build on for their presentation. For example, the Problem Posing presentation showed how course content could be generated from students' lives.

Sachi still expressed confusion over what is to be the group's stance on content. The group began to move toward agreement that they would like some type of "academic" content (e.g., social science) as a focus.

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24. The content group was responsible for handing out course readings to their classmates the week before their presentation in order to orient them to their topic.

The following are excerpts from the notes for this meeting's Brainstorm:

We identified the following goals for the presentation:
* To inform/be informative
* Small group work
* Our ideas about what is content--why and what
* Different teaching contexts
* Discussion, feedback, brainstorming
* Each of us has a role in the presentation
* Clearly defined agenda with time limits
* Do something creative
* Keep to subject (i.e., content-area teaching)

Jerri came in to check on the group, answer any questions they might have, and remind them that they needed to select the readings for their classmates. Lisa asked her if she had any particular focus in mind for their presentation. Jerri noted that a focus on secondary students would be fine since there has been an emphasis in the course up to this point on elementary level teaching, but she also stated that the group should create a presentation that represented their own interests (i.e., it's really up to them to decide).

She then told the group a little bit about the history of content group presentations. One group focused on pregnant teenagers and their nutritional needs. Another year the presentation was on academic topics like math and science for elementary-aged students. One group chose the topic of adult citizenship education. She encouraged the group to think of their learners' (i.e., classmates) needs and interests. She then left to allow the group to get on with their work. If the group had been farther along in their planning, she would have stayed longer and discussed

their lesson plan. However, she quickly realized that they were not ready to do this and left so that they could get to it. This decision to leave reflects her belief that it is essential to mute her own voice within groups in order for groups to take ownership of their own task.

Sachi and Lisa discussed the scope of the content they should present. Lisa talked excitedly about a lesson described in Cohen's book on cooperative learning which used a monopoly game for a series of math lessons. Sachi noted that she wanted a "bigger theme" for the presentation than just a focus on a type of game or song. She wanted to focus on a larger chunk of curriculum rather than simply one activity.

The group was inching toward a communal understanding of content and ways to teach it, but they had not reached it yet. As Danielle suggested, "We're not going to have a comprehensive, this is the answer thing, but we have lots of ideas that we've generated ... pulling together our past notes." In this session the group did make a final decision on the level of the class--secondary--and the type of class--social studies.

The Simulation group presented that evening and had organized an intricate simulation involving three companies vying for a contract to build "living centers" to help ease overcrowding on Earth. Students were assigned to one of the three companies and had 15 minutes to prepare a defense of

their plan in front of the "Supreme Planetary Council" made up of facilitators.

One noteworthy incident that evening was the complaint by a Japanese member of one of the groups that she had been unable to participate in her "company's" discussion. The pace of conversation among native speakers had simply been too intense. She had had things to say but she had not been able to get the floor. A quick check of other international students showed that this was also true for other Asian students. The struggle for voice was an issue within the whole class meetings as well as within the small groups.

Summary of Middle Meetings

In the meetings after the Process meeting, the group continued to discuss the readings they had done on content-based instruction, supplementing the course text with additional readings that they had found. They implemented their ideas that they had discussed in the Process Meeting. They had a secretary take notes on each meeting and pass them out on the following week. Further, they attempted to create an agenda for the following week at the end of each meeting in order to allow group members to be well prepared for the meetings.

The question "What is content?" was a major focus of discussion during this set of meetings and the group approached the question from a variety of angles. They drew from a diverse set of sources in grappling with this issue:

their own experiences and observations of language classes, articles on content learning, the Problem Posing presentation, Jerri's account of previous content groups' presentations, and course texts.

The group continued to focus on a student-centered approach to this question. They repeatedly stated a preference for drawing content from students' own lives and interests. They also discussed ways that academic content can be challenging to second language students due to "cultural gaps" they may have. For example, they discussed the notion that some academic subjects such as social studies may be more culturally embedded than say science or math. A common way that content is encountered in many language texts is to select content that can tie together grammatical and vocabulary lessons. This approach was explicitly rejected by the group.

Sachi continued to argue that focusing too much on students' lives and native cultures can be "boring." However, she acknowledged that content should be interesting to students (as she pointed out earlier in the term with her example of her class on rock lyrics). Further, she argued for focusing not on a specific lesson (e.g., game or song) as suggested by Lisa but on a larger unit or theme of curriculum.

The purposes of studying content were also discussed and included helping students to interpret culture, build a social and cultural foundation of knowledge for living in

this country, and achieving academic subject matter knowledge. Ideas from the Method course were also referred to such as the video of an interactive lesson with an elementary teacher teaching a science lesson to young ESL students. The Problem Posing presentation was also discussed as an example of how content can be generated from students' lives. Finally, Jerri's visit to the group provided them with both examples of content selections by past content small groups and Jerri's advice to follow their own interests and carefully consider the needs of their classmates.

In sum, the group explored a multitude of sources to come to some insight into the nature and import of content in second language teaching. At this point, the discussion was still in the abstract as the group focused on generic issues in content instruction. In the next set of meetings, the group selected the content for their own presentation and discussed ways to deal with a host of questions their selection raised.

The group never talked about how they would make decisions as a group. With such a small group (six members) and egalitarian structure, and the emphasis on collaborative learning, it must have seemed "natural" to group members that they would use a consensus model to decide issues. However, the lack of ability of the group to focus on a particular topic and then make a group decision about it was frustrating for the group.

For example as we have seen, Lisa, in her role as idea generator in the third group meeting, suggested immediately choosing a particular topic for the content of the presentation. She felt that this would be a foundation on which the rest of the presentation could be built. The other members rejected this idea; they felt it was premature to decide that issue. However, Lisa, did introduce the importance of deciding this issue soon and others agreed. It was scheduled to be decided in the fourth meeting. However, it was not resolved until the last week before the presentation.

While the group used these meetings to cover a variety of ideas central to content instruction (e.g., what content is and how it can be taught), the group felt frustrated by the lack of concrete progress they were making toward the presentation. Creating a coherent, tightly focused discussion of a particular topic was difficult for this group (and others that I have observed).

The factors that may constrain that type of discussion are twofold: (1) A lack of a central discussion leader (i.e., teacher) who has the status, knowledge, and skills to focus sustained attention on a topic; (2) the fact that the group consisted of a diverse group of strangers who were approaching this material from different perspectives and with varying agendas. It is possible that it is the structure of the task which militated against such an "academic discussion" (e.g., explicating the Mohan text).

The dynamics of constructing a focused discussion among diverse individuals who have not worked long together, without a strong leader and with materials that were new to all, made it difficult to be productive.

These discussions did provide an important place for the group to discuss their own ideas and the readings. Further, I believe that these discussions were foundational to subsequent planning of the presentation. However, it is also important to acknowledge that these discussions were not satisfactory at the level of, as a group, coming to new understandings of content. They were frustrating for group members, as they worked very hard to come to terms with this topic. Ultimately, the discussion format in traditional terms of academic discussion was never fully satisfying. However, during the last ten days before the presentation, the group's discussion took on a sharper focus as they were forced to create concrete plans for the presentation. This would prove much more satisfying to all.

The roles of the group members continued to evolve. Danielle had definitely taken over the role of timekeeper and agenda watcher which the group appreciated. Each week there was a secretary to take meeting notes. Sachi seemed freer to make comments based more on the topic at hand and less from the point of view of a second language learner or from a cultural perspective. The tension among group members seemed to have subsided. Finally, Lisa (and other members) no longer solicited Sachi's opinions directly but

rather structured turns of talk for her through questions to clarify something she had said.

Coherence and Decision Making: The Last Ten Days

The group met four times in the last ten days before the presentation. Three of those meetings were outside of course time and lasted two and a half hours each. The driving force behind these four meetings was the presentation and there was much left to do. However, the group worked swiftly as they created a lesson plan for teaching their classmates about content-based instruction and finally were able to reach some resolution on their own understanding of some of the key concepts for this approach to second language instruction. The first meeting was on Monday morning, October 21. It would prove to be a very productive meeting.

October 21 Meeting: A Turning Point

We did not meet in our usual spot for this meeting as we found an open room in the basement, across from the "Open Space" where the class usually met for the whole class presentations. A couple of things about this meeting made it different from previous ones. First, there was less time pressure as we were not constrained by the usual one hour limitation. Second, there was more time pressure as the presentation loomed large in the group's mind. The group had met for a total of seven times in seven weeks and now

just ten days before the presentation much needed to be accomplished.

Sachi had noted in her final entry in her dialogue journal that this meeting had been one of two turning points in the small group work (the other being the Process meeting). A careful examination of the transcript provides evidence to back up her statement as it reveals a group working toward a common goal--listening to one another, building upon each other's ideas, arguing, structuring turns for one another to expand or clarify ideas, and crucially, <u>reaching agreement</u> on key issues--in a word, "collaborating."

Many of the ideas which would form the core of the presentation would be decided in this meeting. The agenda centered around the presentation. Sachi started the meeting rolling with a suggestion to use the course's existing small groups to create lesson plans using the approach that they have been studying (i.e., problem posing, simulations, literature, etc.). After much discussion, the group approved Sachi's idea.

Nick introduced the idea of using Halloween as the "content" for the group, in order to take advantage of the fact that the presentation was scheduled for October 31, Halloween night. The group agreed upon this idea but thanks to the prodding of Sachi, the group recognized the need to place a lesson on Halloween into a larger curriculum unit on

mythology. Danielle was asked to write up a description of the unit to be handed out to the class the following week.

Integral to this meeting were the experiences of Adrea in a local high school where she was observing and assisting an ESL teacher. That class, an ESL history class, became the model for a fictional class which the small groups would be planning a lesson for in the presentation. The group reproduced the class population (i.e., Vietnamese, Russian, Ukrainian, and Puerto Rican) and some of the interpersonal dynamics (e.g., lack of interaction among Vietnamese and Puerto Rican students) which she had observed.

Adrea was asked to write up a brief description of the class to provide background information to aid the small groups in preparing the presentation. It is clear from the discussion surrounding the issues of this class that this group took seriously the local educational "context"--the fact that this was a high school social studies class with particular students from particular countries who have a history together.

The outline of the presentation was beginning to take shape. The week before the presentation, students would be given a set of readings on content-based instruction and a hand-out describing an ESL social studies class which is studying a unit on mythology. Their task would be to work within their small groups and create a lesson on the topic of Halloween using the teaching approach that they have been

studying. The groups would then come together and make short reports about their lessons to the whole class.

Two points need to be noted here. First, the group was reproducing many of the central tenets of Whole Language teaching in their own presentation: (1) Using "learning communities" to explore a new topic; (2) structuring a "learner centered" lesson by using the expertise of the small groups to build an understanding of content-based instruction (and to teach other students); and (3) asking the small groups to create a lesson plan in their chosen topic area allows this task to have "a sensible and imminent connection" to students' own lives and agendas.

The second point is simply the high degree of collaboration demonstrated in this meeting. All members of the group were involved in putting forth suggestions, discussing these ideas, negotiating the details of implementing these suggestions, and making decisions. As I discussed above, Sachi suggested using the small groups, Nick introduced the idea of using Halloween, and Adrea's class was chosen to be the fictional class for the lesson.

Faced with an impending presentation in ten days, the group finally was able to make some concrete plans. It is to an analysis of that decision making process that we now turn.

Group Decision Making

The group did not use any kind of formal method for arriving at a group decision. For example, they did not vote on ideas. Rather, one process used was informal consensus, with group members discussing an idea, modifying it, and negotiating it; after time, unless it was challenged, it became a default decision. In other words, after an idea or suggestion had been thoroughly discussed, it became incorporated into the discourse as a decision, unless challenged. A second decision making format was much more explicit, as members overtly expressed their agreement.

In the following paragraph I examine examples of these two "consensus" decision making processes. First, I will discuss Sachi's suggestion of keeping the small groups together. Second, I will look at a group decision concerning the type of class for which they would ask their classmates to create a lesson plan.

Sachi's suggestion went through an extended discussion, with elements debated and negotiated and the suggestion undergoing elaboration. The suggestion by Sachi was originally endorsed by Danielle and Adrea, but then Adrea challenged it on the grounds that the plan would force groups to create a lesson using only the approach that they had been studying. Lisa kept the suggestion alive by stating that she thought it was a "great idea" and wanted to discuss it further.

Nick attempted a modification of the plan by suggesting a "menu" of approaches which the groups could draw upon, thereby not limiting them to their own approach. Sachi and Adrea jointly introduced the concept of our group preparing a "specific lesson" focus for the groups to use. I then suggested that the groups would be able to "deal with" the fact that they were being asked to use their "expertise" to create a lesson based upon the topics which they had been studying. There was a round of consensual agreement after my statement, with Adrea echoing, "Yeah I guess so."

After that point, the group moved on to discussing how this idea could be implemented. The pattern was for an idea to be nominated, clarified, elaborated, and finally <u>assumed</u> in subsequent discussion. A much more direct approach is seen in the second example.

<u>Excerpt 37</u>

Lisa: So we know that they're secondary we are presuming they are high school students. Is that what we're presuming?
Danielle: I'd like to
Nick: Yes yeah uh do we want to say a particular grade er?
Lisa: I think we should be as specific as possible. Are we in social studies? Is that what we are in?
Danielle: I'd like to
Adrea: I'd like to but that's just because I'm in social studies.
Nick: Yeah Yeah I think that's a good yeah
Francis: We have some real (.) experts ha use those guys
Lisa: Okay so it's a high school social studies class. Now is it mixed language? mixed languages?

In this example, Lisa was, in essence, wrapping up weeks of discussion in a very short period of time. She nominated the topic of the level of the class which the

lesson would be geared toward. She "presumed" that the class was high school students. Danielle agreed with that, as did Nick. Lisa then nominated the longstanding topic of type of class and suggested that it be social studies, and Danielle, Adrea, Nick, and I agreed with that. Sachi is not heard from on the tape of this section, but I am certain that her body language was signalling agreement.

In sum, this meeting was extremely productive in terms of moving the group toward the goal of creating a presentation. The next meeting would be the regularly scheduled meeting at class on Thursday.

As the group was breaking up, Sachi mentioned that she did not feel able to participate in the simulation the previous week and "did not want that to happen again" to the international students in the groups in their presentation. This would become an important topic in the meetings ahead.

Evolving Roles

The roles that group members had taken on seemed to have changed over the course of the term. Danielle was now the acknowledged "taskmaster" who reminded the group about what needed to be done, the time left in a meeting, and generally attempting to keep a grateful group "on task." It is interesting to note that this might be the traditional role of the teacher in most educational settings. My own approach to facilitation in this setting was based upon a

desire to let the group do all that it could on its own in terms of decision making and procedural issues.

My own role in the group meetings shifted from a more passive role of listener and occasional contributor to what Adrea described in a journal entry as an "active participant." This shift was partly a result of my feeling that after working together for nearly two months, the group was not going to defer to me as a "teacher." Second, my higher participation was caused by my being drawn into the creative energy of working on a joint task under deadline pressure. I wanted the group to succeed and I felt like a member of the group.

Sachi's own role had shifted from being a minor participant, speaking mostly from her experiences of learning English, to a full participant in the group--making suggestions, raising points about ideas that she did not agree with, and, for the first time, negotiating the meaning of something that she did not understand.

Lisa was much quieter in this meeting than in the past but was clearly an important group member. She continued to structure turns of talk for group members, but mostly confined her solicitations of Sachi to clarifications.

<u>October 24 Meeting: Tension</u>

The group was back in their old room for the eighth class session of the term. There was but one week left to finish the planning of the presentation and the <u>tension</u>

among the group was high. However, the meeting was quite productive as the group identified what they believed were central concepts of content-based instruction, revisited the issue of "What is content?" and worked out some more of the details of the presentation. It is the presentation which drives this discussion and the meeting provides a window into the ways that the presentation task structures the group dialogue.

The meeting starts with the group members reading through a variety of documents produced by the group members in the last week: The hand-out for the whole class written by Adrea and Danielle describing the small group task and necessary background information on the class and student, notes from last week's meeting, and a memo to the group from me.

The handout written by Danielle and Adrea was to be given out that evening to the whole class and contained a description of the "task" which we had created for the groups as well as some background information about the ESL students and the social studies class, entitled "World Cultures":[25]

> Your task, as a group, will be to create a lesson plan on the theme of Halloween. You will use your personal expertise in your group subject area, and integrate this background knowledge with the information that we present to you on content area learning.

The information sheet outlined the general thrust of a curriculum unit on world cultures for a social studies class

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25. See Appendix C.

which was studying mythology. The handout described a "fictional" ESL social studies class composed of 20 students (six Vietnamese girls, five Vietnamese boys, four Puerto Rican girls, one Russian girl, two Russian boys, and two Ukrainian boys) in a vocational high school. The diverse class "is not yet one community," as the Vietnamese students sit and interact only among themselves. This document met with the approval of other group members.

My own memo to the group stressed two points. First, I noted that by choosing Halloween as the content, "we have potentially limited the role that international students can play" as they may have little knowledge of this holiday. I then asked, "How can we ensure that international students will be able to fully participate in this activity?" The second point began, "It has been noted by several group members that the group still has not really discussed some of the core issues in content-based learning." I then asked a series of questions which center around the actual teaching of content in the second language classroom. I also suggested in the memo that each member of our group go to one of the small groups as they work on the task in order to "scaffold that group's efforts." This idea was accepted by group members during the course of the meeting.

The group discussion began by taking up my point about international students and their role in the small group work. Danielle argued that we could tell groups to use their international students as they will know what it is

like to have an outsiders' view of Halloween and "natives" will not. In other words, she urged the group to use the international students as a resource, in that they are in a similar position as the class of ESL students in terms of knowledge of Halloween.[26] Sachi noted that international students are handicapped in the sense of knowledge (of Halloween), but that once the discussion got into teaching method they would not be handicapped.

What followed was a fascinating discussion which interwove three interrelated aspects of this issue of the pedagogical implications of students' cultural background knowledge for a lesson: (1) The international students in the Methods course and their potential lack of familiarity with Halloween; (2) cultural "gaps" as a central problematic of content-based teaching; (3) the challenges of teaching mainstream content to ESL students.

Excerpt 38

600 **Lisa:** ... in dealing with this question one of the
601 things that we read about today and one of the things
602 that was also mentioned in Mohan was that um
603 unfamiliarity or lack of familiarity with a subject or
604 cultural things with which people have no familiarity
605 is the biggest reason why they don't understand....
606 then this is the biggest problem and where context
607 [content] learning fails. So I mean it is a central
608 problem ... But in terms of <u>our</u> class it may be a
609 problem because I mean this is what Francis is raising
610 it may be a problem if people have no clue as to what
611 Halloween is and have to deal with all of that before
612 they can even come up with a lesson or help with a
613 lesson.

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26. This positioning of international students in the class as ESL students is problematic in that it can have the effect of reducing their status. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Lisa raises two issues in this stretch of talk. First, she notes that class readings raise the importance of teachers understanding that a major impediment to second language learners' comprehension of content is their lack of cultural knowledge of a subject. She then connects this to the planning of the small group work in the presentations by noting that if students do not know much about Halloween then they will "have to deal with all of that" before they can really participate in the lesson planning.

I then followed up Lisa's comments:

Excerpt 39

Francis: Yeah also what I was thinking about the problem that I was thinking there is that we have this multicultural teaching situation and the strongest the native speakers we have chosen a topic that native speakers have the cultural knowledge also and you could reverse that situation and made it so that the international students
Adrea: mmmm
Francis: would have had the knowledge and so that the native speakers would have relied on them you so that because the second language speakers don't won't have as much knowledge about Halloween as well as they aren't as strong in in uh language ability you've made it very difficult for them to participate. And my question was what does that teach us about content-based learning or multicultural education? .... Sachi you

In this section, I note that it was our choice of subject matter for the presentation that created this problem. We could have chosen a different topic in which "the international students would have had the knowledge." However, as it now stands, they are doubly disadvantaged: They not only speak English as a second language but they also have to deal with a topic they have little background

knowledge about. I then raise a question that attempts to frame the discussion in terms of a more abstract and generalizable insight into content-based learning and multicultural education: "What does that teach us about content-based instruction and multicultural education?" I finish by turning the floor over to Sachi (who presumably has made a non-verbal bid for the floor).

Excerpt 40

633 **Sachi:** ha In situation like this I think I like the
634 comparative study kind of they may be able to look for
635 the same kind of thing in their culture
636 **Adrea:** They may too in their lesson plans these groups
637 may come up with something that's comparative we don't
638 know what they're going to come up with

Sachi supports a "comparative study" approach in which international students are able to play a role in the lesson planning by reporting on similar myths and traditions to Halloween in their own cultures. Adrea responds to this by noting that the groups can take this approach in their lesson planning if they choose to. It is their decision. (Note the restatement of the group and course norm that groups are free to make their own decisions.)

Excerpt 41

639 **Lisa:** How about if we talk about that in our
640 introduction as a central problem of context [content]
641 learning and have people really focus on that issue
642 that say this is a big problem ....
643 **Danielle:** I think that's a great idea because if we
644 plan it solidly then they'll have to deal with it in
645 the groups ....
646 **Nick:** Yeah I think that we could admit when during the
647 introduction that the activity the topic we've chosen
648 does favor the um first language people and just ask
649 them to be aware of that and and to make an effort to
650 um

Lisa suggests including this issue into the introduction by noting that this is a "central problem" of content-based instruction. Danielle supports this idea and notes that if the group plans this carefully, the groups will "have to deal" with this issue in their groups. Nick also supports Lisa's idea by suggesting that the group could "admit"[27] to the class that Halloween does "favor" native speakers and "to be aware of that." In the transcript below, I again stress the more generalizable idea that this issue is inherent in content-based instruction for second language students.

Excerpt 42

Francis: I think that Lisa's trying to take it to the next step and say this is a problematic for content-based learning its not particular to this context
Nick: uh huh
Francis: its not a mistake we made its its the nature of the beast we're looking at
Nick: uh huh mmmm
Danielle: You can even I mean especially with the kind of content-based learning if we're talking about like a social studies curriculum that's not going to be the students in the class are going to be at a disadvantage even if you are trying to do it parallel to mainstream classes you know give the same information they're at a disadvantage because they don't have that cultural connection and you have to reach out to them somehow you know taking U.S. history if that's the course and making it so that they can understand it on that sort of human connecting level is a challenge for the content for the content course.

Danielle again takes this issue back to the ESL social studies classroom context which directly ties this

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27. The wrongdoing associated with Nick's use of the word "admit" may result from the fact that it was his idea to use "Halloween" as the content of the small group lesson planning.

discussion into the fictional class described by Adrea and Danielle in their handout. Lisa then returns to Mohan's concept of "activity":

Excerpt 43

Lisa: Right. Just to follow this thought through this is what Mohan says also that um what you're trying to get through in something like this is to provide an activity or some kind of stimulus the activity can be the picture thing it can be going to the museum it can be a graph but that's considered the activity and by providing a common activity that everybody is entering into this is how you're bridging not only the cultural gap but giving a familiar set of information a common set of information to for people discourse on

Lisa links the problem of second language students' unfamiliarity with important cultural background to a solution suggested by Mohan's idea of an "activity."

The points I want to make about this stretch of dialogue are threefold. First, what triggered this discussion was the problem that I noted in my memo concerning the international students in our class and the topic of Halloween. Crucially, it was the act of the group creating an actual lesson which provided the context for this discussion. It was this experiential aspect of the class which was at the core of the discussion here. Second, the group collectively wrestled with three dimensions of this problem: (1) The practical problems of deciding on the proper actions the group could take to ensure the participation of international students; (2) the connection that this problem had with teaching ESL students mainstream content (as we had designed it in our task); (3) the more

abstract generalizations that we could gain from this problem for our understanding of content-based learning.

Finally, in this discussion we can see the ways that the task devised by the course instructor created a rich context for the group wrestling with issues of content-based instruction. The interweaving of course texts, the group experience of creating the presentation, and the communal interests in teaching content to second language students combined to make a rich discussion of central issues in content-based teaching.

This meeting demonstrates the complex set of activities which this form of education fosters. Individually, group members brought to the meeting information that they had written up for the group consumption: my memo and Danielle and Adrea's handout for the class. The task of communally creating a presentation raised pedagogical issues which are central not only to content-based learning but also to the broader issues discussed in the Methods course--voice and participation, bridging cultural "gaps," and the challenges of heterogeneous grouping. In other words, the process of planning a lesson for their classmates created a powerful experiential base to learn about Whole Language teaching.

Finally, I return to the collaborative nature of the group discourse. Structuring the course around "collaborative dialogue" served this group well, as all the members continued, even under the deadline pressure of the

impending presentation, to listen to one another, contribute to the discussion, and mutually plan a joint presentation.

Lisa made an interesting move in this meeting in regards to content. In previous meetings, the group had talked and talked about "What is content?" and kept coming back to the idea that content is <u>everything</u>. No matter what kind of class you organize, you have to have some type of content whether it is math, science or the study of grammar and vocabulary. The group had thoroughly plumbed the questions "Where does content come from?" and "Why focus on content?" over the course of many meetings. (In fact, in this meeting they went back to the notes from the meeting of October 3 to help them identify the key discussion points they wanted to stress in the presentation.) However, they had never come to any resolution of these questions.

Lisa made a move in this meeting that effectively rendered further discussion on this issue moot:

<u>Excerpt 44</u>

Lisa: I think there is a problem there talking about what is content. I think we should talk about content-based learning....

This idea was briefly discussed at the end of the meeting and focused the groups' attention on the issues of second language students learning (and teachers teaching) content. The group, weary of the endless and circular discussions of what constitutes effective content, embraced this new orientation. "What is content?" was never raised again. Rather, the group was focused on issues of learning

content in a second language and how teachers can scaffold students' efforts to understand challenging content.

This meeting had been tense, with many issues needing to be addressed before the presentation, just one week. The group broke at the end of the hour to join their classmates for the Reading and Writing group's presentation. A reading lesson in Chinese by two Chinese group members provided the experiential base for a discussion of a Whole Language approach to beginning reading and writing in a second language.

Sunday Group Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 30, the day before the presentation. However, the day after the eighth class, Lisa called me and suggested getting the group together over the weekend. She did not feel comfortable waiting until the day before the presentation to try to finish up the last details. We contacted other group members and everyone agreed to come except for Adrea who was attending the MATSOL conference in Boston.[28] The extensive discussions I had with group members expressing discomfort with meeting without all the group members being present suggests the high level of commitment that members of the

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28. Attending the MATSOL (Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages) conference fulfilled a course requirement to attend an educational meeting or conference and write a brief description of it.

group had to group solidarity. Despite this reservation, the impending deadline pushed the group to meet.

The meeting felt very relaxed, which was particularly nice in contrast to the previous meeting. As we drank tea and munched cookies at Lisa's house, we continued to discuss what might be central issues to raise in the presentation. For example, we talked about the duality of using content to both learn about a particular subject matter and learn language through that content. I also introduced the idea of "parallel information" (Klein, 1986) in which, as Sachi stated in her notes, "Parallel information [is] one way to solve problems of gaps (gaps could be content and/or language) [for example] visual, graphics, familiar content."

Our small group did the same lesson planning exercise as we would be asking the class to do on Thursday. We created a lesson in which our students would first brainstorm questions they had about Halloween, interview more knowledgeable members of the class, and then as a homework assignment, have each student interview one American student.

I noted at the end of this exercise that Sachi had not participated much in the lesson planning. She agreed and said that she was not clear on what happens in social studies classes in an American school. In Japanese high schools, social studies classes use a lecture format. We then talked about ways to include second language speakers in the discussions in light of Sachi's remarks. We agreed

to make a point in the introduction to remind groups to use second language speakers as "resources."

Final Meeting before the Presentation

The group met for the last time before their presentation on the day before class, Wednesday, October 30. They still had to work out the final details of the questions they wanted to discuss in their introduction--Why use content-based instruction? and How to do it?--and in the final whole group discussion following the small group lesson planning. The relaxed mood from Sunday's meeting seemed to carry over as the group spent two and a half hours discussing key issues that they hoped to cover in the presentation.

One of the interesting things about this meeting was the way that the preparation for the presentation forced group members to really hone their own message and understandings of their topic. For me, one of the frustrations of watching this group process unfold over the last two months, was the lack of sustained focus on specific topics. It was, I believe, the source of frustration for other group members. Without a person authorized to lead a discussion of a particular text or idea, the conversation often faltered before any type of resolution or real insight could be gained. I often felt that we were not learning enough about central issues of teaching content to second language students.

However, in preparation for actually standing up in front of classmates, the group did maintain a longer, more sustained focus on key issues (e.g., participation of international students and scaffolding ESL students). Clearly, the multitude of group meetings, readings, efforts to understand issues of content-based instruction, and prior presentations had provided a set of individual and communal resources which the group drew on to talk about these issues. However, a key factor in structuring this discussion seemed to be the ever present presentation. It was the presentation component of the group task which created the social conditions for group members to have to really <u>articulate</u> their views and attempt to negotiate with fellow group members the precise language they would use in asking questions and discussing key issues in content-based instruction.

Adrea also played a central role in this process. Because she did not know what happened in the group meeting on Sunday, she asked a series of questions which pushed group members to articulate their views. The group started off giving Adrea a synopsis of what had been discussed at that meeting. They stressed our discussion of how to ensure that second language speakers could be involved in the Halloween discussion, noting that the problem was not only a potential lack of familiarity with Halloween but also that, like Sachi, they may not know what a social studies class is like in the United States. Adrea then asked a question:

Excerpt 45

Adrea: How exactly were you guys saying that it was vital that the second language members of the class participate? (pause) What was the statement that you were going to make?

Here we have Adrea pushing the group for precise language which could be used in the presentation.

Excerpt 46

Lisa: uh: just acknowledging that they: um I don't know how we figured it out in the end but that they have valuable information that's necessary to get this exercise done in that they'll understand the point of view of the students.
Nick: They can serve really as a resource in um asking questions about Halloween and uh yeah representing maybe the level of understanding of the students they they'd be planning a lesson plan for.
Adrea: So we could like put them in the role of trouble shooters sort of? .... as opposed to saying you're just as ignorant as uh the students you know what I mean?

Lisa and Nick both articulate how they would broach this subject with their groups. Notice the way that the term "resource" is used by Nick, echoing the instructor's comments the first day of class. Adrea rephrases their responses as putting international students "in the role of trouble shooters" and (in her usual style) adds her own sardonic commentary.

We continued to talk about the participation of international students and I brought up the idea that structuring an intense 30 minute activity in which lots of work had to be done can also silence international

students.[29] The group discussed ways to tell the groups that the "process is more important than the product." In other words, doing the lesson planning collaboratively is more important than filling in all the blanks on a lesson plan sheet designed by Lisa.

Lisa's lesson plan sheet provided categories for the groups to fill-in during the lesson planning phase of the presentation. The following are the categories she used (adapted from Mohan):

"Organizing Information" for Halloween Lesson Plan

* Description of Activity
* Important Objectives
* Opportunities for Language Development
* Thinking Process Skills/Analytical Skills
* Halloween Information
* Materials Needed

An important part of the discussion centered around questions and discussion points to bring up in the introduction and large group discussion phases of the presentation. The following questions could be found in the notes written by Adrea for the presentation based upon the discussion in this meeting:[30]

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29. This statement both reflected my own observations of the group work in the Simulation presentation in which Asian students were unable to participate and also drew upon Sachi's own comments on her own similar experience in one of the groups. I believe that a combination of a focus on producing a specific product (i.e., a successful defense of their companies' plan) and a very short 15-minute meeting time, left the Asian students unable to participate in this exercise. Time has social consequences.

30. Each small group was required to turn in to the instructor a packet of information concerning their presentation. For the content-based instruction group, their packet consisted of the following: Workshop outline,

Discussion Points

* What are the problems in integrating foreign students into academic classes?
* How do you close an information gap?
* How to make content accessible?
* What's difficult for you [international students] in dealing with content in your second language?

The discussion in this meeting centered around articulating the key concepts, questions, and approaches used in content-based instruction. In many ways, this discussion was a rich exploration of these central ideas and was a culmination of two months of work. It is interesting to note that the group was intensely on task and all joined into the discussion. However, as usual Sachi and Nick remained less vocal than other members. I continued to take an active role, posing questions ("Concerning the category of analytic skills, if a person turns to you and says what does it mean, what are you going to say?") and giving my own perspective as issues come up. Adrea also posed challenging questions to the group and at one point demonstrated her "senior" status in the master's program with a knowledgeable discussion of "cognitive skills" based upon previous course work.

In sum, the meeting discussion was very much centered on preparing for the presentation but focussed not so much on the actual lesson plan but rather on the discourse of

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introduction, handout of lesson planning task and background information, lesson plans generated by small groups, discussion points, bibliography, the article "Content-based ESL: An introduction" (Crandall, 1987), and chapter notes. See Appendix C for materials contained in the packet that were written by the group.

content-based instruction. The actual activities of the presentation were already decided and what remained was the picking and choosing of the central concepts of their topic and questions to pose to the class. In addition, the group anticipated the questions that the group might ask them.

It is interesting to note that the group picked Danielle to be the group moderator for the final whole group discussion. She was to lead the whole class discussion, keep it on topic, and prompt the discussion with questions. This formalized a longstanding role that she had taken on for the group.

Discussion of Final Meetings

The basis for the statement "The best way to learn about a subject is to teach it" can be seen in the preparation that the group underwent in the last few meetings. They focused on specific features of content-based learning (e.g., why use content-based learning, and how to do it) and individually pulled together her/his ideas and questions (e.g., Lisa's outline of Mohan's ideas, Adrea's notes on the introduction, group member's outlines of their articles, my memo, and notes taken during the group meetings). Tightly focused discussions highlighted these last meetings and centered around what they would actually say to the class and how they would respond to likely questions. To experienced teachers, these steps will be

quite familiar, although usually they are done individually without the benefit of multiple perspectives.

This final set of meetings were focused almost exclusively on preparing for the group presentation. They finally were able to focus on specific issues and make final decisions on them. First, they decided on the general format of the presentation and then in later meetings returned to specific information that they wanted to impart to their classmates.

The structure of the presentation bears a strong collaborative imprint. As we have seen, each member of the group contributed to the final product: Sachi's idea of using the small groups to plan the lessons became the hub of the presentation wheel; Nick suggested using Halloween as the content; Adrea's class which she was observing became the model for the fictional ESL class, and on and on.

In terms of collaborative dialogue these meetings were particularly useful. Members worked smoothly together as ideas and suggestions are argued, supported, and negotiated and decisions are actually made. After the presentation structure was agreed upon, the group focused it attention on issues of including second language students in the class and a honing of the precise message the group wanted to convey to the class.

It is interesting that the focus on defining "content" gave way to grappling with the complexities of dealing with the choice of Halloween and the particular task the group

has created. In these meetings, the group seemed no longer interested in the question "What is content?" and instead focused on the question "What is content-based instruction?" In other words, for them many of the issues of the type of content has been settled (e.g., study of culture as content or students' lives and interests) and the focus was on issues surrounding the teaching of content.

Much of the discussion on this issue revolved around their own presentation. Urged on by me, the group discussed over several meetings the implications of choosing Halloween as the content for the small groups to plan a lesson around. By choosing such a subject, the group had to deal with ways to ensure that international students who are unfamiliar with that holiday could still fully participate in the lesson planning.

The presentation task created the context for the group to act on many of the fundamental issues of their topic. They had to assess what their students know about a particular type of content. They then had to take steps to ensure that any "cultural gap" that these students might have would not prevent them from participating in the lesson planning with their American peers. For example, they discussed ways that group members in their roles as "facilitators" could monitor the groups to ensure the full participation of international students. This illustrates the powerful way that the actual doing of the group task resonated with the group topic (and the principles of Whole

Language). The experiential basis of this course is clearly in evidence here.

One additional note on this final set of meetings. While the group was consistently on-task in all the meetings over the course of the two months leading up to the presentation, the final three meetings were the most satisfying for me both in terms of both being grounded in an authentic teaching context and, conversely, the group profitably analyzing issues on their topic and really forcing themselves to decide what their "message" or core beliefs about content-based instruction were.

A number of factors created the conditions for these rich discussions to take place. First, the hours of group discussion which preceded these meetings provided a foundation for the group to build upon. That is, a communal set of concepts encoded in a common language had been built up in the group. Second, the presentation task both created an authentic teaching situation and provided a forum for the group to wrestle with the complexities of content-based instruction. Third, the instructor's task structured the norms for collaborative dialogue which undergirded these productive meetings.

The Presentation:

Ritual Enactment of Whole Language Principles

The night of the presentation, the group met beforehand to complete the last minute organizational tasks. I met

with the facilitators (we were planning our own presentation) and did not see the group until right before they separated to find their small groups. They looked a bit frazzled!

Danielle as Facilitator

I videotaped Danielle's small group, Problem Posing. She started off with a very brief set of questions for the group to consider: are the problems for the ESL students? What are the "gaps" you have to bridge--cultural, language, content? Where's the stretch for the students for language and content? She also emphasized (and repeated frequently during the meeting) that the group should not worry about producing a "polished product" (i.e., perfect lesson plan) but simply get the key ideas down. Further, she suggested that the process (i.e., group discussion) is more important than the product. She then handed out the "Organizing Information" sheet (i.e., Lisa's lesson plan sheet) and large "butcher" paper with the same categories written on them. These were to be filled out and then hung on the wall for the whole class to see later.

The first few minutes were taken up with the group negotiating with Danielle about the task ("What does it mean to incorporate our group method into the lesson plan?" "What do you mean by 'gap'?" "Is problem posing the content?" etc.). Danielle quickly answered these questions and then sat back to allow the group members to work. Her

role as facilitator was limited for the most part to being "timekeeper" and urging the group to keep moving through the process.

The Problem Posing group reduplicated in many ways, the collaborative process they used in creating their own presentation (see Bailey, in press). The "problem"[31] came from the life of Li Hwa, who stated early in the meeting that Halloween meant "danger" to her as she had heard that there were a lot of young people out on this night and she was afraid for her own safety on the walk home after class. She realized that this might be a "misconception." The group batted around a couple of other ideas before Sarah suggested that perhaps Li Hwa's fear of Halloween could be the "problem."

Danielle reminded the group they had only fifteen minutes left to finish their lesson. The group quickly chose a code--a story about an ESL student who is initially frightened by the costumes of Halloween but after friends explain about the holiday, the student is no longer afraid. The group wrestled (with Danielle's help) to organize the lesson into the categories on their sheet. They used the structure of problem posing to help organize the lesson (e.g., "problem," "codes," and "tools for dialogue"). They identified objectives: lessen anxieties (about Halloween),

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31. Freire's "problem posing approach" to education (see Freire, 1973) begins with the identification of a societal problem in students' lives. This problem is then used as the educational focus of the class.

impart information on the subject, prepare students for unfamiliar cultural event, teach language (through study of specialized vocabulary in the story). They noted that the "thinking skills" involved here are related to the steps of problem posing (i.e., identifying a problem, creating a code for analysis, etc.).

The group worked smoothly together: listening to one another, asking each other questions, and building upon each other's ideas. While they were a bit slow in the beginning as they tried to figure out what had to be done, the group collaboratively created a reasonable problem posing type of lesson plan.

Whole Class Discussion

After the whole class gathered in the Open Space, a "reporter" from each group briefly described the lesson that their group had come up with. The groups did an excellent job at developing creative activities and relating the activities to objectives, language development, Halloween information, thinking skills, etc. For example, the Writing process group created a lesson around the creation of student-generated "illustrated dictionary of spirits" (from various cultures). The Simulation group outlined a simulation in which students would play K-Mart workers who were responsible for making Halloween window displays.

The presentation ended with a discussion session. Danielle, as moderator, asked students who had studied

academic content in a second language to share their experiences. The response was sluggish and after some re-phrasing native English speakers began to respond. As was typical in these large group discussions, Jerri told a personal story to illustrate her own ideas on this topic. While living in Hong Kong, she had taken a scuba diving course given in Chinese, a language in which she had limited competence. She explained that her motivation to understand was very high as it was a "life or death" situation so she asked lots of questions and used her dictionary.[32]

The discussion covered many of the points that the content group had anticipated. Two women talked about their own experience with content and noted how important it is that the students are interested in the content. Another woman said that if the teacher does not take a Whole Language approach to content, it could be very frustrating for ESL students because they would miss so much. An elementary ESL teacher noted that she had found content-based ESL instruction to be very effective and motivating with her young students.

The discussion was dominated by native English speakers as was typical for the large group discussions. Even though the group had tried to structure opportunities for second language speakers to enter the discussion, for the most part

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32. In whole class discussions, Jerri typically told personal stories to illustrate points she wanted to make about language learning or teaching. The norm for class members to draw on their own experiences in this course was continually reinforced by the instructor in these meetings.

they did not. The presentation was over! Two months of intense group work had been completed.

Discussion of Presentation

While the presentations are designed to introduce new subject matter to the class, they, in fact, reproduced the principles of Whole Language and the Methods course structure in 90 minutes. In this sense, this presentation can be viewed as a ritual; that is, week after week, groups created through their presentations a cermonial enactment of Whole Language principles.

In the Content presentation, structuring the presentation around the small group lesson planning, reports of the small groups, and the group discussion reproduced the core pedagogy of this course: A small groups of students collaboratively produce a lesson plan, drawing upon their own expertise combined with knowledge gained from a common reading. The final step of this ritual was the groups coming together to collectively pool their knowledge.

One of the things that I noticed happening over the semester was that students become more and more competent in this type of education. As the presentation ritual was repeated week after week, students learned what the structure of the presentations was and what was expected of them. In a sense, the class began to create, even within the short time-span of a semester, their own Whole Language traditions.

Postscript

The Content group felt pleased with the overall execution of the presentation and relieved to have it finished. However, they were a bit dissatisfied with the "flat" feel of the discussion session. The written feedback they received the following week from the Simulation group was quite positive. Simulation group members felt that the presentation format of keeping their group together to create a lesson plan had worked well, although several people noted the listless group discussion.[33]

The feedback from Jerri was, as always, positive.[34] She noted how the presentation "highlighted a very important principle in teaching and learning--connecting" (e.g., connection of presentation to the structure and developing "argument" of the course, students' own knowledge bases, social structure of the class, content to method). She was also very complimentary about the facilitation style the content members used in working with their small groups,

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33. One simulation group member used her feedback to critique the process of her own group, which had had a rather stormy relationship between group members as well as with their facilitator. She stated, "So far we have concentrated solely on a finished product. We have made little attempt to define the collaborative process for ourselves." She was particularly critical of the exclusion of a non-native English speaker in the group. In terms of the course, not every group collaborates well together and some groups may need more support than others.

34. Jerri's approach to providing feedback for each group's presentation modelled types of feedback for students. She often stressed what went right with the presentation, what she personally had learned, and ways that the class could learn even from mistakes that had been made.

noting that in the group she observed--Danielle "did an excellent job of guiding the group without taking over.... She kept us on track--warned us when we were going too far astray -- let us struggle but giving us helpful hints if we were going to break down."

Final Content Group Note

In the subsequent weeks, the content group continued to meet for the first hour of class. However, the meetings never attained the focus or collaborative feel of the meetings prior to the presentation. Without the structure of the presentation task, the group time was not particularly productive (also true for other groups). This again bears out the critical role that the task plays in this educational structure.

Collaborative Activities, Norms, and Tensions

The experiences of the Content group provide a window into the complex nature of group collaboration as it was enacted in this setting. This course creates a social context for small groups of students not only to learn about new approaches to teaching but also to experience for themselves a Whole Language approach to education. One of the fascinating things about this course is the way that it provides students with both new information about teaching approaches and techniques and the opportunity to experience

the very educational approaches and techniques which they are studying.

The research on this group reveals the complexity of this educational approach. The small groups are organized not only for discussion of specific topics in second language instruction but also to allow the groups to plan and teach a lesson and to experience collaborative work in a small group and a variety of teaching techniques consistent with the principles of Whole Language (e.g., facilitation, dialogue journals, feedback). In fact, as suggested in Chapter 2, one of the characteristics of this experience was the multiplicity of inter-related goals evident in the design and experience of this aspect of the course.

Summary of Findings on Collaboration

The purpose of this chapter is to present a description and analysis of one of the Method course's small collaborative groups in sufficient detail to give the reader a sense of the primary activities, course norms, discourse structure, and individual personalities that were a part of that process. At the beginning of this chapter, I posed five questions to guide this investigation; I have used them in this section to organize a discussion of the research findings. I have also investigated a critique of the small group experience as voiced by group members and identified and discussed a set of tensions present in the course.

The following is a discussion of the research results related to the five questions posed above:

1. **What are the primary group activities engaged in by the group to complete their task?** This question focuses our attention on the actual doing of collaborative small group learning. I start with the group members' belief that this was a collaborative experience. A careful study of this group reveals that the following were the primary activities engaged in during the course of their two months of work together:

1. Group meetings
   (a) Collaborative dialogue on educational issues surrounding group topic and presentation.
   (b) Brainstorming of selected topics for presentation
   (c) Consensual decision making

2. Process meeting

3. Individual actions away from the group
   (a) Writing dialogue journal with facilitator
   (b) Reading course texts and outside texts
   (c) Writing group documents

4. Presentation for the whole class

Group Meetings. As we have seen in the transcripts from the group meetings, the group did structure their group dialogues collaboratively. Hence, they structured turns of talk for one another, negotiated the meaning of new vocabulary and unclear speech, built upon each other's ideas, and crucially, made great efforts to <u>listen</u> to one another.

The general collaborative dialogue sessions were by far the most common form of collaborative talk in their meetings. It is here that the major issues of content-based

learning were discussed and the presentation planned. They also used brainstorming on two occasions to generate "lists" of possible content ideas related to mythology and goals for the presentation. Chapters 4 and 5 will take up the issues of voice and collaborative dialogue and provide a detailed analysis of this aspect of the group experience.

As we saw in the middle set of meetings, one of the challenges of this form of group process was the difficulties the group had in identifying a topic or question and then making a decision or coming to some group resolution. The lack of sustained focus and the ability to resolve issues was a major source of frustration for group members and, I believe, an impediment to learning.

This analysis suggests that it may be important to explicitly raise the issue of decision making in collaborative groups. This would allow groups to consciously consider how they want to go about making decisions. Without the benefit of a group leader or teacher, the group will have to create their own process which allows them to keep a focus and make decisions when they need to be made.

An additional point is the crucial role that the presentation played in decision making and issue resolution. The group did resolve issues under the pressure of the presentation deadline. The fact that the group had to produce a completed <u>product</u> forced them to work past their difficulties in this area. However, it is possible that the

group time could have been more effective if decision making had been a topic discussed in the Process meeting.

Process meeting. The Process meeting was a significant event in the history of this group. It provided a chance for group members to observe and reflect upon the group discourse and negotiate group norms. It also resulted in the group creating the role of secretary and the implementation of certain group procedures such as keeping a visual record of key ideas on the blackboard during meetings and making an agenda at the end of each meeting. Further, group members attributed an improvement in relations among group members and a generally improved group feeling to this meeting. As Sachi noted, the meeting helped the members to "really listen" to one another.

In terms of research, the Process meeting provided a wonderful source of data for understanding some of the tensions that collaboration raised for group members--Sachi and Nick's issues with participation in the group, norms of group responsibility versus individual responsibility, and the mechanisms that the group adopted (e.g., role of reporter). Cohen (1986) notes the importance of setting aside time for cooperative groups to discuss and reflect upon their own group interactions. Based upon the evidence from this group, that advice is well worth heeding.

Individual actions. Although this was framed as a collaborative group task, much work necessarily was done away from the group. Naturally, all of the readings were

done between weekly meetings. It is also clear in the transcripts that group members often came to meetings with specific suggestions or questions that had been thought up during the previous week. The dialogue journals that members (and I) found so valuable were also written outside of class time.

The group extended their research beyond the Mohan text. Each group member found an article or book on content-based instruction and these article formed the basis of the sixth group meeting. The notes from the discussion of those articles were re-read in the eighth group meeting in order to aid the group's discussion of issues to raise in the presentation.

Finally, a wide variety of documents which were written for the benefit of the group were produced outside of class. Many of these writings were not assigned by the group but were initiated independently by group members. These include summaries of articles or chapters of books and discussion of key ideas from readings. I believe that these writings were an integral part of the collaborative process and suggest a high level of commitment by group members toward this project.

In addition, there were assigned writing tasks such as the weekly minutes from the meetings (starting with the fifth group meeting), the background information for the lesson planning in for the presentations, and the packet of information concerning the presentation (e.g., bibliography,

lesson outline, handouts).[35] My own contributions of written materials included the transcripts of the third and fourth meetings and my memo to the group.

2. **How does the group explore the question "What is content?" in the course of the group meetings?** By tracking this central issue across a whole series of meetings, we can begin to understand how this collaborative process actually functions and can gain insights into how its structure both facilitates and constrains enquiry. The small group format provided the members with ample opportunities to both individually and collectively research this topic. I saw ample evidence that group members individually reflected on and wrestled with this topic outside of the group.

The group task utilized the motivation of members to seek out new information about content. The motivating factors include the responsibility of presenting content to peers and the group members' own intrinsic motivation which led them to select this topic and which the course was structured to accommodate.

The small group task provided two distinct ways for group members to explore the nature of content. First, the members read a variety of articles and texts by experts on this topic, participated in class presentations which demonstrated an array of varied content (e.g., science lesson, problems of international students), and used their own experiences of language learning and teaching. These

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35. See Appendix C.

resources were used in the group discussions to identify key questions, terms, and concepts useful in talking and thinking about content.

Second, in the process of planning the presentation, the group had to grapple with selecting a topic which would function effectively for their own classmates. Once they settled on mythology, they were then confronted with an authentic example of content which international students would probably not have knowledge of. The discussions surrounding the participation of international students seem particularly relevant to issues of <u>how</u> to adapt content for second language speakers. The task of both researching a topic (theory), planning their lesson (practice) and the dialogue that ensued (reflection) provided for the praxis in teacher education that was argued for in Chapter 1.

While there were multiple affordances realized in this process, its structure also created its own constraints. The group struggled to identify key concepts and sustain an academic discussion on the topic of content (or any other core topic for that matter). By "academic discussion" I mean a discourse which is structured to explicate a text (oral or written) by a group or class for the purpose of identifying key arguments, terms, and concepts. These key ideas would then be used in subsequent discussions as building blocks for understanding new texts and planning and analyzing a group activity such as a presentation.

The point that I am making here is not that the group was remiss or defective. To the contrary, I think they were as frustrated as I was about this missing component to their talk and struggled mightily to correct it. Rather, I am interested in understanding how this "outcome" was produced through the group interactions as they worked within the group task. Is this a result of the absence of a teacher from the group process? This topic is taken up in the section on "critiques" below.

In sum, the participant structures created in this small group produced a complex set of activities (individual and communal) and rich dialogue around the question "What is content?" The group researched this topic by reading articles and texts of experts, discussing it with their group members, and planning and implementing a presentation. The experience was rich and provided many opportunities for group members to engage in the discourse of the field of second language teaching and directly experience a central part of teaching. The many issues raised in their discussions would be valuable for any course on second language teaching. After all, what could be more basic to teaching than coming to an understanding of <u>what</u> to teach? In addition, it also raises questions about the function of instructional discourse organized around peer dialogue versus teacher led discussion.

3. **How did the structure of the instructor's task affect the small group process?** As I have shown in the discussion of the group's planning of the presentation, the task was an essential component of this group experience. The task structure provided not only the primary goal of the group work (i.e., the presentation) but also provided a general orientation to a process by which the goal could be accomplished (i.e., collaborative dialogue). In my analysis of the group meetings, I have argued that the actual planning of the presentation was instrumental in structuring the group's discussion of core issues in content-based instruction. Further, the presentation provided the conditions for the group to finally resolve long-standing issues in their lesson plan and be able to focus on core issues of content-based instruction.

It is possible to imagine a class in which the group would have been asked to research a topic and create a fictional lesson, that is, not to actually teach but simply plan a viable lesson. (This would be very similar to the task created by the content group in their own presentation.) However, at least two important components of this experience would have been missing: group investment and the teaching experience.

The investment in time and energy was quite high for this group. They frequently met outside of group time, individual members did additional reading on their own, and produced on their own initiative written summaries and notes

on their readings. The motivation for this kind of commitment was complex, as each group member had his or her own agenda. However, I believe that a major factor was that the course was organized for the group to be responsible for the learning of peers and they had to discharge this responsibility publicly. Evidence of the importance of the group task is underscored by what happened to the group (and other groups) <u>after</u> their presentation was finished. The content group was unable to maintain any consistent focus on their group topic (or any other topic for that matter). The importance of the group working together on a lesson which they would present in front of their peers cannot be overestimated. It was central to this group experience.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the group work was the role that praxis played. Rather than a linear group process in which the group members would come to an understanding of the basic concepts of content-based learning (what they wanted to teach their classmates) and then move on to planning their lesson, this group's understanding of their topic was informed in important ways <u>through</u> the process of planning their presentation. The group dialogue tacked back and forth among discussions of topic readings and course concepts, personal ideas and experiences, and the actual presentation planning. This same pattern was also observed in the Problem Posing group.

4. **What are the collaborative norms operating in the group?** It is now possible to identify a set of core group norms which were operating in the content group:

1. Stay on task.
2. Draw on personal experience.
3. Refer to knowledge gained from course texts.
4. Structure turns for others.
5. Listen to others.
6. Maintain positive social relations with one another.
7. Negotiate meaning.
8. Make decisions consensually.
9. Participate actively in group meetings.
10. Take responsibility for the participation of other group members.
11. Take full responsibility for the design of the presentation.
12. Create documents individually and share them with the group.

These group norms highlight the <u>interdependent</u> nature of collaborative learning. Group members consistently attempted to create a cohesive group discourse by staying on a common task, listening carefully to one another, and negotiating the meaning of new terms or unclear speech. Further, the group oriented toward a set of norms resulting from the value of seeing each other as "resources" by sharing personal experiences, structuring turns of talk for one another, making decisions consensually, and enacting a norm of active participation and group responsibility for that participation. It is important to note that many of

these norms function in multiple ways so that "negotiating meaning" is both crucial to achieving a cohesive discourse and is a clear way that group members signalled that they valued the participation of other group members. Further, it is also a sign that the purpose of the group dialogue is for group members to understand one another and create a set of communal concepts around a topic relevant to teaching.

The norm of maintaining positive social relations within the group was both challenging and largely covert. While members were aware of tensions within the group, this was never brought up in the group meetings, including the Process meeting. However, group members did clearly make efforts to avoid confrontations. The importance of maintaining positive group relations is easier to see in cases in which groups fail to work together well. While only one group has actually disbanded in the six years that the course has been taught using small groups, each year one or more groups suffer through serious conflicts among group members. However, the affective dimensions of collaborative learning are an important part of the experience of group learning and and certainly something that teachers must be aware of if they use this form of education in their own classes. This experience, positive or negative, provides opportunities for students to learn about this aspect of small group work, first hand.

The types of knowledge that group members draw on in their meetings (and in the course as a whole) privilege both personal and expert knowledge. One of the aspects of this course which sets it apart from many graduate courses is the ability of students to draw upon their own personal histories in class to make sense of the course topics. As Cazden (1988) has noted, academic discourse privileges the professors' and authors' voices and rejects the personal experiences of students. The small groups are ideal places for students to discuss their own experiences of learning and teaching and use these experiences to generate and critique ideas. However, the content group also relied heavily on the Mohan text, Enright and McCloskey, and various outside readings that they found. The tacking back and forth between personal experience and expert texts is a dominant pattern of group interaction and a valuable source of learning.

5. **How did group members view their own learning as a result of their participation in their small group?**
Students that I interviewed reported being very pleased with the course and appreciative of (and occasionally overwhelmed by) its complexity and the power of its student-centered approach. One of the things that has struck me in interviews with members of the Content group is the diversity of learning which they report. Another thing that I noticed was the difficulty they had in articulating what

they did learn. They were often overwhelmed by the scope of the question and were left groping for words.

For students new to the field, they report that it was all new and exciting and it was a wonderful way to be introduced to the field of second language teaching. The students' own professional and educational backgrounds and their own teaching interests for the future all impact on what they got out of the course. For example, Lisa became excited about the possibilities of cooperative learning and did additional reading on this topic and experimented with it in her own music classes (It was on her insistence that the group included two chapters from Cohen's book on cooperative learning in the readings for the presentation). She continued after this course to be fascinated with the potential for small group work and its role in education. In a subsequent class of Jerri's, she volunteered to take on the role of facilitator for a small group. In fact, as part of her interest in small group work and facilitation she read this chapter and reported to me that she found it very helpful for thinking about these issues.

Sachi also reported that as a result of this class she experimented with cooperative learning and heterogeneous grouping in her own Japanese class and generally tried to make her own class more "interactive." Nick identified gaining a lot of information on approaches to teaching (e.g., simulation, content) and from the experience of being a student in a Whole Language classroom. This course

challenged his own (more traditional) notions of teaching and learning (more about this later).

The types of learning which students talk about can be divided into two general categories: Course content and experiential components. By course content, I am referring to the subject areas outlined in the course syllabus (e.g., Problem Posing, Reading and Writing, Process Writing). These subjects were the focal point of particular presentations (student, professor, and guest) and course readings.

Students report enjoying the exposure to a wide variety of ideas introduced into the course, particularly when they had the satisfaction of learning about one topic in greater depth. They were a bit frustrated with the rather superficial introduction topics in the presentations as one 90-minute presentation and readings a couple of articles on a topic was simply insufficient to really learn anything more than a few basic concepts about any particular approach. However, the small groups provided a format for a much deeper exploration of a subject and students appreciated the chance to sustain a focus on a topic that they chose for themselves.

The key to understanding the group presentations from the instructor's point of view is to see how they connect to Whole Language teaching and learning. Individually, no presentation goes into great enough depth to adequately prepare students to use a particular approach in a

classroom. However, if the presentations are viewed as exploring Whole Language principles from a variety of angles while utilizing these same principles in the structure of the presentations, we can begin to get a sense of the complexity of the instructor's vision for the course and the actual learning goals she has for the class.

Experiential learning played a large role in the students' reports of the class. Students talk about the experience of working in collaborative groups (and all that entails) as being a central component of the course and an important source of learning. For example, Danielle talked about the fact that issues of group interaction which were part of her small group experience are also important to be aware of in the second language classroom:

> If you want to teach using groups to have that experience [of group work] is necessary.

When I asked her what she had learned in the group she listed the following: (1) Listening is really important (and she believed that she had improved in this skill); (2) don't prejudge group members, because they can surprise you; (3) give groups enough time, particularly when you consider the array of language and cultural issues present. A set of ideas that have served her well in subsequent teaching, which I have observed.

One of the best indications of the impact of this approach to teacher education has had on the students is to follow them as they move through the program and begin to actually teach. I have had an opportunity to observe

Danielle teach ESL and history in a large urban high school on several different occasions.[36] Danielle's teaching is very much in keeping with the Whole Language principles studied (and experienced) in the Methods course. She routinely uses collaborative group work in which students research a topic and then present what they have learned for their classmates. In her ESL class, she writes dialogue journals with her students.

Perhaps most impressive of all is her ability to draw upon students' own interests and knowledge to get them involved in her classes. For example, in a history class she had students choose a person from the 1920s (e.g., Babe Ruth, Margaret Sanger, Marcus Garvey, Alice Paul) to research and then she held a cocktail party with students coming in character and in costume. She reports that students loved it and they learned a lot about their own character and others! While her teaching approach is her own creation, it has been nurtured in a program which is based upon the ideas chronicled in the Methods course.

In terms of the goals that the instructor has designed into the group tasks, the Content group was a success (see Chapter 2). They certainly had a rich set of experiences with a Whole Language class: Working collaboratively in a heterogeneous group and researching and then teaching classmates about their group topic. They also got the

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36. I was her supervisor for her teaching practicum in the spring of 1993.

opportunity to research a course topic and plan and conduct a class presentation. We have seen in a variety of ways that the Content group did evolve into a "community of learners" who collectively learned about content-based instruction, assisted one another in a wide variety of ways, and very much had a group identity.

The goal of constructing a "professional discourse" addresses a crucial component of this educational experience. The group demonstrates in many ways that they did, indeed, enter into the discourse of second language teaching as it is currently configured. Group members both used the vocabulary of the field (e.g., BICS, CALP, student-centered learning, communication) and oriented to many of the core values of the field (e.g., focus on students' needs, teachers as advocates for second language students, recognizing cultural diversity of ESL students). There is no doubt that the groups were an important site for group members to enter the discourse of second language teaching as it provided both an access to the field's discourse (from course texts, presentations, and peers) and an opportunity to discuss, negotiate, argue, and practice this language.

My own role as facilitator was also part of the instructor's vision for the small groups. The dialogue journals that I wrote with group members both allowed for a rich dialogue on issues of teaching issues and group process and also modelled a teaching tool used in many ESL classes. In addition, my role in the group provided group members

with an opportunity to observe and experience a role in collaborative group work that functioned not only to provide expertise on a particular subject but also to aid a group in working together. It also provided me with an opportunity for praxis related to facilitation as I struggled with reconciling theory (e.g., power of collaboration and issues of voice) and practice (e.g., Process meeting and dialogue journals) with reflection (e.g., discussion in facilitators' meetings).

The small group experience also challenged group members conceptions of schooling. The multiple roles they were asked to take on, the types of knowledge they could draw on, and the fact that much of the course was created through peer dialogue absent the authority of a teacher all combined to immerse students into an apprenticeship to a Discourse that was novel and alien to many students. The tensions that this experience created are explored next.

Course Critique

I would like to focus on two issues that offer a critique of the course. First, I have presented evidence that the Content group had difficulty sustaining a focus (see the middle meetings) on a particular topic to the point where they could gain some new insight or resolve a central question. For example, group members agreed that there was still much more work to be done on content-based instruction after the presentation was finished. The group felt that

they still had not really gotten a clear sense of the issues in content-based learning even after weeks of discussion and reading. My own frustration was centered around the fact that the group spent so much time on "What is content?" that they had little time to explore <u>how</u> one might go about actually teaching content to second language speakers.

Does this suggest that equal status peers have difficulty maintaining a coherent discussion or identifying key issues? I wonder if an important function of a teacher in instructional discourse is to maintain a focus on a particular topic and guide discussion to make sure that certain key connections are made.

A related critique is offered by Nick in an interview after the course ended, in which he addresses the tensions that are at play in this course:

> [Jerri] didn't expect everybody to get everything and she ... realized that people were at different stages and they they will gain things according to where they're at um and I like that it's a real humanistic realistic kind of approach.... I mentioned I dared to mention it might have been nice to have a little bit more lecture lecturing on her part just to set the stage.

Nick's interest in the traditional instructional discourse of teacher monologue--lecturing--is interesting and can help us identify a central set of tensions present in the course. He wrote about this issue in his course evaluation:

> For me the group presentations were both the positive and the negative. These presentations, with accompanying activities, were the principal means for my gaining new insights. And I should include the collective exploration in our small group (content-based learning), which was a wonderful kind of experience in group learning and consensus building.

> At the same time, though, I came away feeling that the presentations were somehow too dominant in the course, and the old transmission-model part of me wishes there had been more nuts-and-bolts material from you ... um ... perhaps, <u>lectures</u> (heavens do I admit this!? Old modes die hard!) I realize this contradicts so much of what you tried to convey....
>
> I rather expect that as the weeks and months go by, the work we accomplished and the lessons we learned will begin to stand out with greater clarity. There are many subtleties here--not all of which I can grasp--that's one of the reasons that I appreciate your approach to teaching.

When I asked him about "what you lose" in this approach compared with a more traditional educational approach (in response to his comment in the interview), he replied,

> I think it may be just hard information uh: Jerri's been working on this with this material for a long time and has lot and lots of ideas and can draw on many different sources and I think that perhaps it's some of that gets lost just the real body of information ... we gain how the process works through cooperative method and like I think it Jerri says ... it's better to do it and learn by doing rather than just to sit around and talking about it ... but my sense is that um you know some of the information that may not get conveyed.

Nick's critique brings up a host of fascinating issues. First, it is clear that he appreciated the strengths of the course as structured and admired its experiential base. However, he was also comfortable with a traditional class structure in which the teacher plays a central role. In some ways, the course left him somewhat dissatisfied. For him, what was missing was "hard information," by which I believe he meant the knowledge of experts in the field such as the instructor and authors of texts. He left the content group feeling that he did not have a firm grasp of the core issues of content-based instruction, despite many hours of task-oriented discussion on this topic.

Nick's point of view also resonates with my own experience of the course. I too left the small group experience with some frustrations over the lack of "hard information" learned by the group about content-based instruction. For example, as a group, we never got to the heart of Mohan's approach to second language instruction.[37] We also focussed very little on the actual techniques and materials used to teach content to second language students. As Sachi noted in an interview,

> We spent so much time on like why and what ha .... but I think it was rather obvious ha in a sense but the most difficult part is how to do it I mean effectively and interesting interesting things like that but uh we didn't get there. ha

On many occasions the group did try to focus on these issues and did spend group time discussing them. However, without a teacher to guide the discussion by focussing attention on core ideas, connecting ideas of content to Whole Language, and leading a sustained analysis of fundamental principles of a text (like Mohan's), the rich personal examples, promising beginnings, and insightful comments of group members tended to evaporate. Like sand slipping between the fingers, a complex set of inter-related ideas are difficult to grasp and hold on to.

At times, students need to be scaffolded by a person who is at a more advanced stage of knowledge. Crucially, such a person must have the knowledge, teaching skills and

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37. It is likely that Lisa did gain some real insight into Mohan, based upon the detailed summary of his ideas she produced for the group.

the status in the group (or class) to scaffold students in their efforts to make sense of a new topic. While peers can play this role (and do), they are often limited both by a lack of knowledge of a new subject and the role status to lead such a discussion. Since most of the course content is presented by peers, group members do not get this scaffolding on their group topic outside of the group.

I believe that I might have had the knowledge and teaching skills to lead such a discussion in the Content group; however, my role in the group was not to be the group's "instructor" but rather to aid the group in collaborating together. My voice in the group was muted (as was Jerri's) in order to provide for the conditions in which group members' voice could be heard.

However, while I felt this frustration during the term, I had underestimated the value of the presentation in structuring opportunities for group members to stretch their own ideas. This research has shown me how the discussions surrounding the presentation did provide a forum for discussing fundamental ideas, attempting to resolve key questions, and encouraging group members to review readings and previous meeting notes. And yet, group members tell me that even after that series of meetings, they still felt they had not fully engaged their topic. And I believe them.

The instructor believes that it is essential that group members have an opportunity to collaboratively explore their group topic and plan their presentation outside of the

hearing of "experts." A teacher's presence would, in fact, alter the social conditions which are instrumental in creating the rich array of experiences which I have documented in the content group. My experience with the group suggests that she is absolutely correct. It is time to let the instructor's own voice enter this discussion.

Instructor's Perspective. Jerri's response to this critique can help us better understand how she is viewing the course and teacher education. The feeling that Nick expresses of not being satisfied with the amount of "hard information" he received from the class is viewed by her as a different conception of both the goal of the course and the nature of learning to teach. First, she notes that the course has multiple goals arising from the experience of being a student in a Whole Language classroom and from her point of view expecting students to plumb the depth of their chosen topic is not a primary goal of the class.

Hence, text explication is not what this class is set up to do. As she reasonably argues, if she had been primarily interested in conveying a set of facts to students, she would have used one of the tried and true teaching approaches for doing this (e.g., lectures). If she had been interested in text explication, she could have set up the task to foreground that activity as she is certain that her graduate students are quite familiar with this kind of schooling from their long years of education.

Nick's interest in hearing more of the voice of Jerri strikes at the heart of course structure and her view of learning (and teaching). She believes that Nick's desire for more hard information reflects a more traditional view of education which centers around teachers guiding students toward certain types of information and explicating course texts. However, her experience as a teacher with these kinds of classroom activities suggests they are not a particularly effective way to develop long term understanding and development in students. Jerri writes,

> My theory suggests that my telling them won't necessarily do this either. It's the combination of telling and doing overtime that develops the complexity of the concepts and skills to use them.

The knowledge produced in traditional classes often results in students knowing facts which are quickly forgotten after the test. This course is obviously oriented toward praxis with the process of learning being a combination of theory, practical action, and reflection.

Jerri views Nick's stance as a form of <u>resistance</u> to the structure of this course. After having gone through this process, he is still not persuaded that what he learned through this process was of more value to him in his preparation for teaching than a more traditional course in which he would have learned more "hard information" directly from an instructor. She hastens to add that this resistance is completely within his rights as a student in the course. That is, his resistance does <u>not</u> make him a bad, slow, or lazy student. In fact, it suggests that he is encountering

a new discourse (e.g., Whole Language pedagogy) which is at odds with a more traditional educational discourse acquired in his years of schooling and further that he is thinking about the tensions between the two discourses. After having this experience with the class, and an introduction to the theories which underlie it, he is in the process of reflecting on it. As long as he stays in the program, the dialogue will continue.

After reading my critique of the lack of sustained focus on a topic and difficulty with text explication, Jerri responded,

> If they or if I or you had explicated the text for them, they would have felt satisfied (hard information). Even if they felt satisfied from such a practice, would it have helped them put together an interactive lesson from it? Then would I have been satisfied with what they had done? (In the past I have not been satisfied with what students in the class produced after my explicating methods texts.)

Here Jerri is raising the issue of the efficacy of text explication. She went on to write,

> ... maybe it was the process itself that was not satisfying to them. They didn't enjoy the uncertainty and contingency of face-to-face interaction, the need to consider other people's ideas rather than just making personal decisions, having the patience to understand someone else's confused ideas and making sense of them, dealing with knowledge as shifting rather than static (all of which to me is what teaching is all about).... Is there some kind of angst in coming face-to-face with one's own responsibility or that there are an infinite number of ways of doing this? Is there a desire for authority and certainty in the face of its demise?

In this passage Jerri eloquently raises the whole issue of the difficulties of learning a new discourse (or as Gee might suggest, becoming a member of a new Discourse). It is much more than simply learning a new professional language.[38] The discourse of the Methods course challenges deeply felt ideas about knowledge and authority, roles of teacher and student, and the process of education. She also proffers a description of teaching that seems quite removed from the traditional "transmission model" (Enright & McCloskey, 1988). For her, teaching involves understanding a subject from the student's point of view, meaning making, and "dealing with knowledge as shifting rather than static."

Conclusion

The small group collaboration which I have described and analyzed in this chapter provides a window into a form of educational activity--collaboratively small group work--and instructional discourse--collaborative dialogue. The experiences of the Content group resonates in fundamental ways with the perspective on teacher education argued for in Chapter 1. That is, this form of education provided students with an opportunity to step into a new Discourse in education, to apprentice themselves to this discourse in which they would have opportunities to encounter a new way

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38. See Tharp & Gallimore (1988) for a case study of a teacher confronting the intellectual and emotional dimensions of learning a new view of teaching.

of talking in schools (i.e., collaborative dialogue), use professional vocabulary and concepts (e.g., scaffolding, BICS, CALP, content-based instruction), take on new student and teacher identities, and new schooling values of seeing students as resources, constructing voice for one another, and using a "language of care" in schooling rather than exclusively a "language of analysis" historically privileged in schools (Willett & Jeannot, 1993).

It was also a discourse that covertly had the seeds of a critique of traditional practices in education. As Beyer (1988) has argued, teachers need not only to understand the current practices of schooling but also to have the ability to critique them. I believe that this course provided students with the basis for a strong critique of schooling in which students' knowledge and interests are typically not respected and students do not have the opportunity to teach one another (and the teacher). Further, it provided a critique of schooling practices that force students to compete with one another rather than cooperate, that suggest that the world is amenable to right or wrong answers--or, in Jerri's words, that knowledge is "static" rather than "shifting."

Students in the Methods course encountered this new Discourse and had a multitude of reactions to it. Many embraced it, while others resisted it. However, in the Content group something rather marvelous happened. The group struggled to create a truly collaborative discourse in

which everyone had a voice. Further, the group was highly committed to exploring their topic and creating a successful presentation. They were in large measure successful in these endeavors.

The critique raised in this chapter and Jerri's response suggest a multitude of questions. My intent is not to attempt any pat settlement of these dynamic issues. Nor do I privilege Jerri's voice over Nick's. My role as a researcher is to take both seriously and try to understand them. The issues raised here will be revisited in Chapter 5.

I have been intrigued by the nature of voice; its interactional structure and function in this setting. One way for me to make sense of the issues raised in this chapter is to better understand the nature of voice in groups: How is it constructed in dialogue? What does it look/sound like? How can we know when someone has or does not have a voice? And, in turning to issues raised in the critique: Is there a relationship between the difficulties encountered in the small group and issues of voice? What is the effect of muting the voice of traditional authorities like authors and teachers? Is Jerri's voice really muted in this course or simply ventriloquized (i.e., projected through others)? What tensions are created by basing voice on positioning international students as resources? Does Sachi really have a voice in this? In order to gain

insights into these issues, it is necessary to have a framework for viewing voice, which is the focus of Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

A FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTIGATING VOICE

> Occasions in which people are left without words are systematic outcomes of a set of relations among a group of persons bound in a social structure.
>
> McDermott (1988)

Introduction

Voice is one of the terms that our society uses to refer to a range of communicative processes. We can talk about the stylistic voice of an author of literature, a singer's voice, or the "small still voice" of our conscience. Each conjures up something unique to an individual. Political voice--the voice of African-Americans expressed through the N.A.A.C.P. or laborers' voices amplified through their unions--on the other hand, is explicitly connected with the social world. To have political voice is to have access to a forum for voicing one's needs and desires and having the power to make others hear and respond.

Voice is also used when discussing the collective ability of a group to speak in a unique way about distinctive interests. Carol Gilligan (1982) tells us that women speak in a "different voice" from men on matters of relationships, self, and morals. Historically, women's voices have been routinely discredited and silenced. Ethnic

and racial groups struggle for voice within our schools and broader society (Weis & Fine, 1992). Again, the struggle centers on power; the power to speak one's own truth in a forum in which others listen and respond.

The voice that I explore in this chapter cannot be framed in terms of formal power over (Kreisberg, 1992), for the site that I am investigating, the Content group, is built upon the collaborative interactions of equal status peers. Voice in this site is bound up in complex ways with access to a forum for speaking, the capacity to both speak and have something worthy of saying, and the willingness of others to hear, value, and act on that speech.

The wide-spread interest in voice comes out of broader social processes evident in the late 20th century that embrace communication as central to our lives.[39] As Cushman and Cahn (1985) suggest,

> The "problem of communication" is a major theme of our age. It fills our bookshelves and the advice columns of our newspapers. It spawns endless methods, therapies, and courses in the name of self-improvement, interpersonal adjustment, or whatever. It explains ... and, we hope solves ... all other problems. If you want to find a mate, save a marriage, get a job, sell a used car, educate the public, prevent a war ... then communicate!

We could add to their list: If you want to learn a second language, communicate.

The point I want to make here is simply that language and communication have in this century become the object of

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39. See Carbaugh (1988) and Katriel & Philipsen (1990) for analyses of "communication" as a cultural category of American speech.

near obsession. Meta-analysis of communication processes is currently a dominant way that we approach social life. Hence, as we saw in Chapter 1, Gee uses "Discourse" to express his concept of a group's cultural organization.

Many of the approaches that educators are currently experimenting with involve a restructuring of traditional relationships among teachers and students. In the field of second language teaching, there is wide-spread interest in continuing to develop communicative based language classes which require students to learn from one another without the teacher's presence. Whole Language and cooperative learning approaches, used in all subject areas and with all ages of students, are organized around the active participation of students, willing to work with and learn from peers as well as teachers.

A key component of all of these approaches is the participation of students. In order for these classes to be successful, they must be structured in ways that allow universal participation of their students. The Methods course and its small groups provide a fertile site to research issues of student participation and class organization.

In this research project, I use the analytic metaphor of voice to help make sense of the nature of student participation in collaborative learning. My research suggests that voice is co-constructed in multiple ways among group members. In Chapter 5, I analyze the discourse of one

of the small group meetings of the Content group in order to gain an empirical base for understanding the complexities of participation and voice in collaborative learning. The case of Sachi provides evidence of how an international student's voice can be amplified or muted in this educational setting.

In this chapter, I develop a framework for conceptualizing voice as being co-constructed among group members. In order for an individual to have a voice in a particular group, the social system--its norms and values--must be structured so that each member has the opportunity to speak and other members are willing to hear. Further, voice requires a group organization that orients toward the knowledge and interests of its members so that they will both want to speak and have something worthy of saying.

In short, the voice of an individual is a profoundly social creation. Hence, this research is oriented toward uncovering the social system in this course which fosters or mutes individual voices. Among the purposes of this line of research is to both gain an overall sense of the role that voice plays in collaboration in general and, more specifically, apply the voice framework to specific group interactions to help understand better the local ways that voice is co-constructed by the Content group and the educational implications that this local system has for the participation of students.

The analytic metaphor of voice has proven to be a powerful tool for investigating the educational discourse found in the Methods course. I first conceived of this research project in terms of voice three years ago when I was conducting some preliminary research in the course. While working with a group of course facilitators, one issue seemed to dominate our discussions: How to create conditions within the class to support students' ability to fully participate in both their small groups and in the course as a whole.

We explored ways to support different types of students within the course, with particular emphasis on teachers with little practical teaching experience and international students. Experience had shown that these were the students most likely to be left out of class discussions. One of the challenges was to create classroom norms which would help students to view one another as valued sources of knowledge and experience, which we felt was crucial for collaborative learning. We realized that this approach to education was alien to many members of the class and would need support in order to be successful.

During that semester, I read an article by McDermott (1988) in which he argued that being inarticulate is not merely a function of the inability to talk at length with few pauses or use language in a creative way. Rather, he suggested "that occasions in which people are left without words are systematic outcomes of a set of relations among a

group of persons bound in a social structure" (p. 38). In other words, a person's inarticulateness is a group outcome and cannot be reduced solely to individual characteristics. Further, he argued that in order for a person to be articulate, he/she must be in a social context in which others are willing and capable of hearing.

McDermott provided a general outline for understanding the social nature of what I came to call "voice." He pointed me toward investigating the social contexts in which group members gain (or fail to gain) a voice in the group discussions. I began to understand that key elements of this process were both empowering students to feel that they could have a voice in the course and preparing peers to really listen to and value their classmates. Since that time I have grappled with the complexities of voice and have developed a conceptual framework for understanding it.

For the discourse analyst, this frame provides an empirical means for tracking voice in conversation. It focuses attention on the subtle ways that face-to-face interaction is coordinated and the ways that social identities, knowledge, and social context physically materialized in discourse impact upon issues of voice.

For an educator, this framework draws attention to particular barriers to voice that students may encounter in classrooms. It points to issues of the organization of turn-taking, the types of knowledge that are privileged in a given setting, and the ways that group members signal that a

person has been heard and their participation valued. Educators interested in using collaborative small group learning must create a social system which allows students in groups to participate in the group dialogue. If a student does not participate, that individual is not only denied the putative educational benefits of peer dialogue but other group members are also denied the opportunity of drawing upon the full range resources available in the group.

The Social Construction of Voice: A Framework

I have developed a methodological framework for conceptualizing "voice" as being co-constructed by a speaker and audience. In order for a member of the group to have a "voice" in a meeting, I have hypothesized that a minimal discourse sequence must include the following three interactionally coordinated moves:

1. Speaker gains the floor.
2. Speaker speaks acceptably.
3. Audience publicly "hears" the speaker.[40]

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[40]It is, of course, true that a person may be deeply influenced by what someone says or writes without the speaker/author ever being aware of the effect he/she has had. However, my point here is that in order for a member of a conversation to have a voice, that person must have a sense that their talk is being attended to and heard, and this must be publicly signalled. Hence, in this perspective of voice, "hearing" is a social process and not a cognitive phenomenon.

Viewing voice in terms of this three step sequence provides a conceptual lens for viewing the local organization of discourse and its relation to the participation of members of the conversation. The concept of turn is used as the primary unit of analysis in this scheme and is defined as any instance in which a member of a conversation gains the floor and speaks. However, back channel utterances (e.g., "mmhuh," "right," and "yeah") are not considered turns of talk. The first step is gaining the floor and while this step may seem simple and unproblematic, research into interethnic communication suggests that it is neither (Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Shultz et al., 1982). However, for now my point is simply that in order for a person to have an opportunity to have a voice in a conversation, they must have access to the floor.

The second step in the sequence is the actual oral text produced by a speaker. Because a person's speech is always oriented toward an audience, what topics can be discussed, what code or language is used, how long one speaks, etc. is socially constrained. When we attempt to communicate with others, we are forced to adjust our speech to accommodate what they can hear. For example, the ability of a group member to speak in ways that others would find interesting is in part a reflection of the type of knowledge which is privileged in a particular social setting.

Finally, the step in which others publicly signal to the speaker that they have heard him/her is essential to the

co-construction of a voice and can be verbal or non-verbal. This signalling might include evaluative speech such as "Good idea" or speech that explicitly acknowledges a person's prior comment, such as "What Sachi brought up is really relevant." In both cases, the speaker publicly signals that he/she has heard what a prior speaker said. The importance of this public "hearing" (or lack of it) in terms of voice is that participants are explicitly signalling that the speaker has joined the conversation and his/her speech has been heard and, in many cases, is being woven into the ensuing discourse.

In sum, I am advocating a view of voice as being socially constructed through a tripartite sequence of (1) turn-taking, (2) speaking, and (3) hearing by an audience member. Each of these three steps has social origins and none can be reduced to merely the characteristics of the individual speaker. In order to explore the complexities of this conception of voice, I now turn to a more detailed treatment of each step.

The tripartite structure proposed in this framework has a rather unfortunate appearance of conceptualizing communication as a strictly linear process. It is true that a slot must open up in discourse before a person may have an opportunity to speak. And it is also true that a person must speak before a subsequent speaker can make reference to that original turn of talk. In that sense, language is linear. Words flow one after another; this phrase follows

that one; and in many cases, one speaker follows another. However, meaning is not necessarily linear but may be retroactively assigned. Language is linear in many respects but communication is not. This model is designed to capture the flow of communication.

Turn-Taking

One requirement of any communicative act is that there must be a forum for that message to be delivered to an audience. In conversation, the first step is to gain the floor. In writing, this involves the distribution of a written text to an audience. My primary focus in this chapter is on turn-taking in oral discourse but the issues raised are also applicable to the analysis of written texts.

There is a growing literature in educational research on the diverse ways that access to the floor is organized in classrooms (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1982; Shultz et al., 1982; Bloome & Willett, 1991; Greene, 1983) and the negative impact that the organization of turn-taking in schools has on the participation of culturally diverse groups (Philips, 1983; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Cazden, 1988). This research has made it clear that the inability of non-mainstream students to successfully participate (e.g., gaining the floor, speaking on topic, being heard) in mainstream classes impairs their ability to succeed in schools. For educational researchers, access to the floor is an important focus of research.

Components of Turn-Taking. An analysis of turn-taking in conversation reveals the following (adapted from Sacks et al., 1974):

1. Speaker change is frequent.

2. Turn order is not fixed.

3. Turn size is not fixed, but varies.

4. Relative distribution of turns is not fixed, but varies.

5. Turn allocation techniques are used:
   a) A current speaker may select a next speaker.
   b) A person can self-select.

Of particular interest to my research on voice are two factors in turn-taking: (1) relative distribution of turns and (2) turn allocation techniques. In other words, I am interested in finding out who talks and how much they talk in relation to others present and by what mechanisms speakers gain the floor (e.g., self-selection, ritual allocation, selection by current speaker). It is obvious that turn-taking plays a prominent role in small group discussion as gaining the floor is a prerequisite for speech.

In the research literature on cross-cultural communication, a prominent theme is the varied organizational systems utilized in turn-taking. Of particular interest for this study in situations in which conversationalists are face-to-face and the turn-taking system is fluid rather than ritually organized (e.g., debates, teacher-led recitation, marriage ceremonies). English can be characterized as "linear," with a typical

pattern being one person speaking at a time with a short pause between speakers. The prospective speaker must pay close attention to the current speaker's speech (e.g., intonation) in order to anticipate the end of that person's turn of talk and an opportunity to take the floor. In this sense, turn-taking is interactionally accomplished as the current speaker signals that he/she is ready to end a turn of talk and the next speaker prepares to take the available slot in the conversation.

Other cultural groups organize turn-taking differently. Scollon and Scollon (1981) note that Athabaskans organize their turn-taking system differently than English speakers and that this difference puts them at a disadvantage. Their system for signalling a speaker change is different in terms of intonation and pause time between speakers. The result is that

> just as the Athabaskan is emphasizing a point, the English speaker interrupts because he feels the Athabaskan is not going to go on. (p. 31)

They suggest that this has an important and negative impact on interethnic communication: Athabaskans are often left without a voice because they are unable to hold the flow long enough to satisfy their communicative needs.

Within the Methods course, Asian students are also on occasion, left speechless. Li Hwa, in an interview, observed that American students have been trained to "think fast" in large group discussions. Before she can gain the floor, an American student has already successfully taken

the floor and begun to speak. Clearly, in any system in which voice of participants is important, one must attend to the local system of turn-taking being used. If a person has trouble getting the floor, it will be difficult for them to participate in discussions.

The concept of "gaining the floor" in oral discourse has its analogue in the distribution of written texts and varies by text type (e.g., notes, letters, academic articles, newspaper articles, books). The point here is that in order for writers to have a voice, they must secure a distribution system for their written texts. That is, there must be a system for getting the word out to potential readers.

Another feature of a social context that impinges on turn-taking is social identity. If a person does not have the right to speak or does not feel that they have the right to speak in particular settings, then they are unlikely to take the floor (cf. Shuman, 1986). Students may not speak in large group settings because they do not feel that it is their role to talk.

Gaining the floor as the first step in this sequence suggests the following fundamental questions for any investigation of "voice":

1. Who speaks and how much do they speak in relation to others who are present?

2. How do speakers gain the floor? (In written texts, how do writers' texts get distributed to readers?)

Speaking

The second phase of the voice sequence--speaking--is closely identified with an individual's voice. However, while an individual does, of course, do the actual speaking, there are powerful social factors which constrain what can be said and how it can be said in a particular context. In fundamental ways, the language which we use in a particular situation is linked to our social identity, the purpose for the conversation, the types of knowledge privileged, degree of command of the language, etc. However, it is also important to recognize that it also is these very components that create the conditions for shared understandings (Gumperz, 1982; Ellis & Roberts, 1987). In this framework, the content of talk is highlighted; however, it is important to note that social context also constrains the form of talk (e.g., an acceptable length of a turn of talk) (Mehan, 1979).

The conceptual system suggested by Hymes's SPEAKING paradigm (1974) provides a technical vocabulary for describing many of these components of a speech event. Gumperz (1972) describes a speech event by noting that

> members of all societies recognize certain communicative routines which they view as distinct wholes, separate from other types of discourse, characterized by special rules of speech and nonverbal behavior and often distinguishable by clearly recognizable opening and closing sequences. (p. 17)

This system allows for an analysis of the principal factors which create the conditions for particular forms of speech

and provides a foundation for an analysis of conversational discourse in a particular setting.

A crucial factor in the social construction of voice is the type of privileged discourse or knowledge which is used in a particular institutional setting. Speech which can be seen by others as "worthy of being listened to" or "persuasive" cannot be reduced to a set of universal characteristics. Rather, what is "worthy" speech in one social setting may be inappropriate in another. This observation is not limited to the obvious factors of topic and word choice but also must include the ideological and epistemological underpinnings of situated speech.

Motives. C. Wright Mills wrote an article, "Situated actions and vocabularies of motive" (1940), in which he argued that the motives used to explain our actions are (1) institutionally situated, (2) located not in individual's heads but in coordinated social action, (3) words.

> The postulate underlying modern study of language is the simple one that we must approach linguistic behavior, not by referring it to private states in individuals, but by observing its social function of coordinating diverse actions. (p. 904)

Mills argues that the motives that people use to justify their behavior have their origins in institutional practices and, hence, vary from one setting to another and through time. Further, rather than attempting to locate motives as situated in the psyches of individuals, it is more profitable to understand how these motives function to regulate the conduct of social actors. Mills proposes that

motives are simply and only <u>words</u>. That is, in response to questions about our conduct (or anticipated questions) we draw on situated vocabularies of motives to justify our actions.

> A medieval monk writes that he gave food to a poor but pretty woman because it was "for the glory of God and the eternal salvation of his soul." Why do we tend to question him and impute sexual motives? Because sex is an influential and widespread motive in our society. Religious vocabularies of explanation and of motives in our society are now on the wane. (p. 910)

The key to Mills's article and its link to voice is his claim that motives are inherently other-oriented, that is, social. We use a select vocabulary of motives, situated in particular institutional settings in order to orient toward normative behavior. To appear rational in an academic setting or moral in a religious institution requires us to explain our actions by a delimited set of vocabularies of motives that are appropriate for that setting. For example, appealing to the epistemological category of "revelation" is not persuasive at all in universities but may be quite powerful in a religious organization.

Crucially for the investigation of voice, the discourse analyst can use instances of rationalization or justification as a guide to institutional norms and values. While group members in the Content group do not often draw upon a vocabulary of motives to justify their actions, in other social settings this type of talk will play a crucial role (e.g., courtroom or political setting). Mills' focus on the institutional setting, coordinated social action, and

the actual vocabularies that are used to explain or justify one's speech are foundational categories for the exploration of speech and voice.

Warrants. A second closely related frame for viewing speech is provided in the work of Kenneth Gergen (1989). He argues that while voice can be gained or lost due to factors such as power and economics, the ultimate source of voice is warrants--a "configuration of shared understandings" (p. 73):

> That is, people furnish rationales as to why a certain voice (typically their own) is to be granted superiority by offering rationales or justifications. (p. 74)

To the extent that others sanction the warrant evoked, the speaker will have a voice. Gergen identifies five common warrants for voice: direct experience, reason/logic, trust, passion, and morals.[41] He also notes that what constitutes a warrant varies from setting to setting.

In understanding issues of voice, it is important to track the types of motives and warrants evoked in a setting in order to gain insights into the local criteria for having something worthy of saying, being persuasive, or justifying a specific action. A particular institution creates a warrant for voice which is grounded in particular criteria, and failure to adhere to that warrant renders one's speech ineffectual (or possibly even incomprehensible) (Gergen,

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41. Compare Gergen's warrants to Aristole's three modes of proof: (1) character of the speaker (ethos); (2) appeal to emotions (pathos); 3) logical proof (logos) (Boone & Harris, 1985).

1989; Gee, 1990; Wertsch, 1991; Mills, 1940; McDermott, 1988).

Hence, one of the factors that must be considered when investigating voice are the local criteria for warranting a voice. It is not enough to attend to who gains the floor and speaks. We must come to understand in a particular institutional context what types of talk are privileged in terms of knowledge (e.g., personal experience or textual) or discourse structure (e.g., essay writing [Scollon & Scollon, 1981] or recitation [Mehan, 1979]). In other words, in order to understand how the social context shapes the voice of individuals we need to come to understand what types of talk have currency in particular settings.

Social Identity. Social identity also plays a fundamental role in shaping the speech used by a person in a particular social setting. What other participants know about a speaker in terms of institutional role (e.g., professor, student), knowledge of topic (e.g., experienced teacher or newcomer to the field), personal characteristics (e.g., argumentative, cooperative, cultural background) constitutes one's "biography" in that setting and influences how others interpret your speech and the degree to which they attend to that speech. Social identity also affects how people see themselves in a particular social setting which influences their willingness to speak on particular topics.

Social identities are both historically situated and interactionally constructed. In other words, while an individual may have an institutional role (e.g., teacher), what happens in the interactions among participants can reinforce this biography or alter it in significant ways. An expert can be found to be a fool; an unknown can emerge as knowledgeable.

Further, the rights and responsibilities that accrue to particular social identities also impact upon the ability of that person to successfully perform certain speech acts (e.g., requests, promises, threats) (Rosaldo, 1990). For example, it would not be possible for a member of the Content group to successfully order other group members to do something in the presnetation. The equal peer status of the group requires that members decide issues communally.

Knowledge. A person's ability to speak can be enhanced or constrained depending upon the types of knowledge which are utilized in a particular setting. For example, a speech event which encourages participants to draw upon their own personal experiences may provide a promising setting for widespread participation.[42] In investigating voice it is crucial that we look at what knowledge is being utilized and

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42. It is also distinctly possible that "personal experience" may not be a suitable topic for particular cultural groups in specific settings. The level of participation in any speech event is a complex matter and is influenced by social identity, topic, relations among participants and a host of other culturally embedded factors. My purpose here is to simply note the effect that knowledge required to enter a discussion can affect who does or does not speak.

the distribution of that knowledge among members present. For example, if a person is not participating in a dialogue, it may be because they do not have the necessary knowledge to do so. The question then becomes, how did it happen that group members are privileging knowledge that a group member does not have.

Codes. The local language or codes being used in a setting has important implications for voice. Highly elaborated codes--the professional jargon found in specialized fields (e.g., quantum physics, medicine, farming, linguistics)--and the particular language, dialect, and register spoken can have clear implications for members participating in a discussion. Collaborative dialogue is structured so that the code used is not a heavily specialized form of English but, rather, relies largely upon everyday English and only uses technical vocabulary introduced through the course and communal readings.

Comprehensibility. Finally, the issue of comprehensibility must be considered. An audience must be able to understand what a person is saying in order for that person to have a voice within a group. An important part of comprehensibility is located in the surface structure of speech (e.g., lexical items, sentence structure, cohesion, and coherence). However, comprehension is also bound up with all other aspects of talk discussed in this section. Certain types of knowledge or motives literally make no

sense in certain institutional settings. However, as we have seen with Sachi's talk in the Content group, comprehensibility can also be interactionally negotiated when group members value one's words.

Conclusion. In sum, particular social settings provide local warrants for speech. In order for members to have a voice in a discussion, they must have something worthy of saying by local standards. Following Gergen (1989), in this framewor, I use warrant to refer to the use of situated vocabularies by a speaker to orient an audience toward a shared construction of communal talk (e.g., knowledge, social identities, ideology, task, and motives). This is crucial in order to understand the social construction of voice. Different institutional settings require different forms of speech in terms of warrants to be persuasive or to make a contribution to the discussion or to justify one's actions.

In investigating voice, the researcher must strive to understand the relationship between local forms of sanctioned talk and the individual's ability to participate in that talk. The challenge for the educator who is interested in supporting the participation of students is to structure talk in ways that provide access for the range of topics, knowledge, social identities, and language codes available within the group. The local social organization of the Content group delimits the types of topics discussed (e.g., task related), knowledge utilized (e.g., personal,

course readings, communal, and Whole Language), motives used to justify actions (e.g., collaborative norm) and warrants used (e.g., personal experiences related to task). The equal status social identities created through collaborative norms both promote the opportunities for group members to participate and limit the interactional roles that group members can take on. With a group member like Sachi, the fact that English is the language spoken in the group is clearly an important factor in her ability to participate.

Finally, all of these issues discussed under the rubric of speech can not only impact upon the ability of group members to function effectively in a speech event but can also limit members' willingness to speak at all. The types of topics we choose to talk about or the range of warrants sanctioned in a particular institutional setting all impact who will even attempt to gain the floor and speak.

The following questions are used to guide my research of the speech of group members and its relation to voice:

1. What types of warrants are used in members' speech?
2. What forms of knowledge are privileged?
3. How do the local language codes used affect members' voice?
4. What speech acts are evoked in a member's speech?

However, a person's speech must be listened to by others in order for that person to have a voice. It is to the next step in the voice sequence that we now turn.

Social Signalling of "Hearing"

If voice is co-constructed by groups for individual members, then there must be ways for members to signal that they have "heard" another group member. While signalling of hearing will vary from one context to another, what does not vary is that for a speaker to have a voice, an audience must materially signal that they have heard that person's speech (or read their written texts).

As I have suggested above, each step of the sequence of voice is co-constructed among participants. However, this last step in the sequence is one that can be overlooked as we focus on who speaks and what they say. Equally important is who listens to what types of talk for it is through the act of hearing that members signal that they value a person's participation and it is the way that a person's ideas are taken up into the group discourse to be evaluated, argued for or against, built upon, etc. By tracking hearing in discourse, we have a mechanism for understanding local norms for judging speech to be comprehensible and valued in a particular setting.

The local resources for responding to a person's speech vary according to social context, purposes of the event, etc. In a political speech, cheers (or boos) from the crowd, discussion of the speech on the evening news programs or daily newspapers, and rebuttals from opponents constitute a form of "hearing." In a classroom, the praise of a teacher or the grimace of a classmate may be forms of

"hearing." In the collaborative learning group being researched in this study, hearing includes not only a public signal that group members are attending to a member's speech (e.g., "right" or "yeah") but also cases in which a person's speech has been taken up by group members and woven into the fabric of the group discourse.

The signals (or lack) of hearing constitute a micro-regulatory system. Members of a group can sanction a person's speech with the type of "hearing" used. Conversely, if a speaker is not attending to the local norms of interaction, the lack of "hearing" or a "negative evaluative hearing" (e.g., "Can we stay on topic!") can provide a type of negative sanction which orients the speaker to the local norms. Hence, hearing can be a tool in the negotiation of local norms of interaction.

In most conversational settings, attending to a speaker is done so automatically that we are unaware of how it is socially organized. "Hearing" a person can include attending to a speaker with lowered eyes and motionless bodies as one might find in a meeting of Japanese businessmen, back channel feedback (e.g., "Uh huh") provided by North Americans in a social gathering, and actions taken in response to a request. In collaborative educational dialogue, cases in which group members refer to previously stated ideas, opinions, suggestions, etc. of fellow group members constitute a common type of hearing and one which lies at the heart of peer collaboration.

In the discourse analysis conducted for this research, I have focused on both who gets heard and the discursive resources used among members of the Content group to signal hearing. An essential step of this research has been to operationalize the concept of hearing in order to use it as a research tool for investigating conversation. By hearing, I am referring to an intertextual link between a current speaker and another text.[43] The second text could be either a written or oral text. For example, an intertextual link that is common in the Content group is between a current speaker and the prior talk of a fellow group member. Hearing is the way that one group member refers back to a previous comment by another group member.

Hearing then is defined as the creation of intertextuality between a current speaker's turn of talk and a text created by another person. In other words, intertexuality is the juxtaposition of one text with another. In this frame work, I am primarily interested in tracking the juxtaposition of a current speaker's turn of talk with a previous turn of talk by a fellow group member. This hearing could involve a paraphrase of a person's ideas, a positive or negative evaluation of a previous turn of talk, a comment, a request or clarification or elaboration or a host of other discursive moves. Further, there can be

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43. Intertextuality is the linking of two separate texts. In this frame, intertextuality could involve oral or written communication (see Bloome, 1989; de Beaugrande, 1981; Volosinov/Bahktin, 1929/83).

a considerable gap in time between the intial turn of talk and the hearing. As a discourse analysist, I am searching for intertextuality among group members as crucial evidence in investigating who is heard.

However, there is no simple formula for using hearing as a component of voice. It simply provides a heuristic device for investigating the types of intertextual links among participants in a conversation. Once these links have been established in the data, then an interpretative process must situate how they are functioning in that setting in relation to members' voice. For example, the appropriation of a person's ideas by another group member would not be an example of hearing, although it would provide crucial information about how voice is being constructed for members in a local setting. A crucial part of identifying a hearing is placing that intertextual link within the local context in order to properly interpret its meaning.

In the data under consideration in this research, the <u>frequency</u> of intertextual links (i.e., the number of hearings), the extent to which a group member's talk is evaluated positively, and the types of actions which other group members respond with, are all salient.

"Hearing" type can be divided into two broad categories: (1) action and (2) discourse. By <u>action</u>, I refer to physical evidence that a person has been heard. In the group, an idea that is raised by one of the group members that actually makes its way into the presentation

would be a form of action and an unambiguous hearing. For example, when Nick suggests using Halloween as the content of the presentation lesson, I count as evidence that he was heard the fact that his idea made its way into the enactment of the presentation. However, because I have drawn data primarily from the group meetings, my main focus in this research project has been on exploring how hearing is manifest in the group discourse.

The following is a typography of ways that hearing is signalled in the Content group. While I am not claiming that these categories are universal, they are I believe a good beginning for understanding how hearing is accomplished in discourse. In describing these categories, I have used language appropriate for analysis of oral discourse. However, many of the categories could also be used to analyze written texts.

Intertexual "Hearing" Response

1. Personal reference
2. Ideational reference
3. Discourse cohesion
4. Evaluation
5. Response to speech act
6. Meaning negotiation
7. Collaborative completion
8. Back channel

1. **Personal reference.** A person refers to another's prior turn of talk by using a reference to the speaker's

name (e.g., Adrea's idea) or by the use of a personal pronoun (e.g., your suggestion). This type of discursive move materially links the current speaker's turn of talk with a prior turn of talk and constitutes a form of hearing.

2. **Ideational reference.** An idea introduced into the discussion by one person can be discussed by a subsequent speaker. A speaker signals that an idea has been heard either by using the identical lexical items (e.g., a word or phrase) or a paraphrase of the original speaker's words.[44]

3. **Discourse cohesion.** In this category I am grouping the diverse set of linguistic devices used in conversation to signal that one person has maintained a common topic across turns of talk.

4. **Evaluation.** Evaluation links a previous turn of talk with an explicit judgement by a current speaker as to its acceptability. Evaluation can be positive or negative. In the content group, it is common for one group member to make a suggestion and another group member to respond with "Great!" or "I have a problem with that."

5. **Response to speech act.** One of the key components of any analysis of hearing is the relationship between the discourse function of the speaker's comment and the response (or not) of other members. If a person makes a request, evidence of hearing must include an analysis of how the

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44. One issue that is left unresolved in this treatment is occassions in which one person appropriates the ideas of another. It is for these sorts of actions that it is absolutely necessary to investigate how local "hearings" are being interpreted from the emic perspective.

hearer responds to that request. Hence, speech act analysis is an important part of this framework.

6. **Meaning negotiation.** Meaning negotiation constitutes a type of hearing as a group member take remedial steps to negotiate a common understanding of a person's turn of talk. Crucially, any discourse move that attempts to clarify or elaborate another's speech would constitute a type of hearing.

7. **Collaborative completion.** The completion of a sentence or phrase begun by one speaker and completed by a current speaker is a type of collaborative completion. The completion is often positively evaluated or echoed by the original speaker: Bob: I went to the ahhhh ... Jane: store. Bob: Right.

8. **Back channel.** In many conversations members provide verbal signals that they are attending to each other's speech. These are often in the form of "uh huh,""yeah" or "right." These are frequent in the Content group meetings and provide at least a weak form of hearing.

These categories of hearing must be viewed as <u>sense making frames</u> and can only be applied to actual discourse through careful analysis of how instances of talk coincide with the hearing categories actually functioning in the local discourse. For example, meaning negotiation in the content group is a form of hearing, but in a more adversarial context it might function to silence others (e.g., "What do you mean!"). In addition, the types of talk

that are highly valued, in terms of positive hearings, provide crucial data on the local warrants of speech being enacted in a particular setting.

The following are questions that I use to investigate hearing in this research project:

1. What are the local discursive resources used to indicate that a person has been heard?

2. How many intertexual links are there between a member's turn(s) of talk and subsequent turns by other members?

3. What is the function of the hearings within the discourse (e.g., negative evaluations of a person's idea functions differently than a positive hearing)?

Conclusion

The voice framework proposed in this chapter reminds us of the complexity of social interaction. In order to co-regulate one's presence, actions, and meanings in face-to-face interaction requires a host of adjustments and aligning actions among participants. Voice is the communal product of the coordination of multiple domains of interaction: gaining a turn of talk, orienting to one's audience so that one has something worthy of saying, and finally, the willingness of others to acknowledge your talk. This perspective brings home the fragility of our social lives. And yet, in researching the Content group, the stability of certain aspects of the social scene suggests the presence of a durable set of factors: institutional setting, group membership, and task.

This framework provides a warrant for investigating the communal interactions which structure opportunities for group members to have a voice in a social setting. I have argued that in order to understand the co-construction of a person's voice, we must understand the institutional setting in which the conversation takes place as well as do a fine grained analysis of group discourse. Voice is viewed as co-constructed by the group and cannot be reduced to characteristics of an individual.

Investigation of voice requires that we gather data on who talks and how they got the floor, what is actually said in turns of talk, and how others members signal that they hear that talk. However, it is always useful and often necessary to complement discourse analysis with an array of other ethnographic data (e.g., interviews of participants) in order to gain a deeper understanding of how to interpret the local talk. I now turn to an application of this framework for the investigation of voice in the Content group.

CHAPTER 5

AN ANALYSIS OF VOICE IN THE CONTENT GROUP

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine collaboration in the Content group from the perspective of voice. I begin by applying the voice framework to the discourse of the Content group's fourth meeting. I view this meeting as a kind of critical incident, as it was here that the fact that Sachi "missed a lot" was (unintentionally) interactionally accomplished, which triggered the Process meeting. By viewing the group interactions through the lens of the voice framework, we can gain insights into ways that group members' voices can either be amplified or muted through the social interactions of the group. I then turn to a discussion of the role of voice in participation and attempt to reconcile the voice of the individual with the social nature of voice advocated in my framework. I complete this section with a discussion of the critique of the course discussed at the end of Chapter 3 and explore the role that voice plays in text explication. Finally, a host of educational issues about the role of voice in collaborative learning are explored.

Because the discourse analysis sections are, at times, rather detailed, and the issues that I am exploring range from theoretical issues of voice to collaborative discourse

to educational issues on the Methods course, it may be helpful to be as explicit as possible about the major issues I am exploring in this chapter.

Focus of Voice Analysis

The following is a brief sketch of the analytic concerns explored in this section.

Application of voice framework: The analysis of the fourth group meeting provides the reader with an opportunity to see how the voice framework can be used to analyze the discourse of a specific social setting.

Voice as co-constructed: A central claim of the voice framework is that voice cannot be reduced to the characteristics of an individual member of a group. Voice is co-constructed through the interactions of co-present group members and the institutional setting in which the conversation is taking place. The group meeting provides a site for that claim to be explored.

The relationship between voice and local speech events: The analysis of two speech events found in the group meeting provides strong evidence that a shift in speech events within a single meeting impacted the voices of Sachi and Nick. A detailed discourse analysis of these two speech events using the voice framework provides evidence of how their varied levels of participation are interactionally organized. The educational implication of this finding are explored.

Participation in collaborative work: A key element of collaborative group work is the active participation of all group members. This group meeting provides data that indicate that participation is unequally divided among group members. I explore the possible educational implication of this fact by conceptualizing participation in terms of having a voice in the group process.

Factors affecting the participation of group members: I explore a variety of factors that impact upon the participation of some of the most active and least active group members using findings from the discourse and interview data.

The relationship between individual and social voice: Voice is closely identified with individuals and yet the voice framework claims that it is a social construction. I explore how to reconcile the individual and social aspects of voice.

The fourth group meeting was largely composed of two speech events. The first, what I call "collaborative dialogue," was the normal group meeting discourse which I described in some detail in Chapter 3. The second, shorter speech event, called "Brainstorming," was used to generate ideas on the theme of mythology, which could then be used as content in the group presentation.

One note of caution is that this group meeting was selected because of its potential for providing insights into a complex array of issues about voice as manifested in

this small group. One of its attractions was that Sachi had noted that she had not been able to fully participate in this meeting and I wanted to understand how that had been interactionally accomplished. Hence, this may not be a typical meeting. However, the collaborative dialogue section is very similar to many other such events before and after this meeting.

Analysis of Data

The following section contains a detailed analysis of the fourth meeting of the Content group. This analysis has been guided by the voice framework and focuses on turn-taking, warrants of talk, and ways that group members signal that they hear one another. The meeting consists largely of two speech events. Following Gumperz (1972), speech events are defined as "communicative routines" which are viewed as "distinct wholes, separate from other types of discourse, characterized by special rules of speech and nonverbal behavior" (p. 17). I have used the conceptual system developed by Hymes (1972) to analyze the speech events in this meeting.

In order to gain insights into the local turn-taking economy, I coded each turn of talk by person, length of talk, and how the speaker gained the floor (e.g., self-selection or solicitation). This information provided data not only on who talked and for how long but also on how the floor was structured within a speech event.

A turn of talk is defined as any instance in which a group member gains the floor. However, back channel utterances (e.g., "mmmhuh," "right," "yeah") are excluded.[1] A turn is typically bracketed by another member's turn before and after. I have labelled the total length of time that a person speaks in a given speech event "air time." This measure is based upon the tabulation of lines from the written transcript and is calculated at the rate of 14 words per line. This measure of "air time" provides a way to compare the amount of time that each group member had the floor during a speech event.

In investigating the content of the speech of group members, I focussed upon the nature of the warrants and knowledge used by group members. I also attempted to understand the type of speech act evoked by the speaker. This information provides insight into what speakers consider to be talk that is worth listening to.

I track the system of "hearings" that the group used in the two speech events. Again following the voice framework, I am assuming that a group member does not have a voice unless other members of the group publicly signal that they have heard the speaker.

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1. Hymes (1986) has noted that there is no general agreement on how to distinguish "turns" and "floor" in conversation. In my analysis, a turn is not merely marked by a change in speaker but by the fact that a speaker has taken the floor. Following Edelsky (1981), floor is conceived of as "the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/space" (p. 405, cited in Hymes, 1986). Hence, back channel utterances are not counted as turns.

The analysis of the transcript of this meeting is supplemented with data drawn from the Process meeting and interviews with group members. The transcript of the two speech events from the Content group's fourth meeting is in Appendix B.

It is to an analysis and discussion of the first speech event that I now turn.

Collaborative Dialogue: An Analysis of a Speech Event

The collaborative dialogue speech event took place in one of the regular Thursday evening meetings. This part of the meeting constitutes a common type of communicative event among group members, which I have labelled "collaborative dialogue." In order to describe this speech event, I draw upon the specialized vocabulary of Hymes (1972). The setting has been well established in Chapter 3 and I have only to add that this speech event lasted 35 minutes. All of the group's 6 participants were present. The ends (goals and purposes) of this meeting were primarily to select a suitable content around which to build a presentation lesson. Virtually all of the meeting revolved around that task.

The act sequence is the sequence of both message form and content. Group members spent most of their time discussing two topics. First, the primary subject of their discussion is a general topic raised by Lisa in the third

meeting as to a possible "content" to organize the presentation around. A second topic was nominated by Sachi concerning the type of students the presentation will focus on (e.g., elementary or secondary ESL class, mainstream class with ESL students, adults).

The emotional tone or keys of this event can be characterized as friendly but serious. The discussion is on task, as is typical for this group, and group members are seriously engaged in discussing their topic. Although they disagree with each other at times, there is no hint of anger. The instrumentality or form of talk is face-to-face oral interaction. The form of speech used in this speech event is standard spoken American English and can be characterized as a non-restrictive code, that is, the language used is not of a technical nature but draws vocabulary from a wide discourse pool of common knowledge. This is an important feature of the collaborative aspect of the discourse as an unrestricted code provides ready access into the group discourse for a wide variety of English speakers. However, for Sachi English is quite a restrictive code at times.

The norms of the group dialogue have been described in some detail in Chapter 3. Primarily, the group norms revolve around the need for equal status peers to jointly create a lesson plan. The norms of interaction evident in this speech event include staying on task, making consensual decisions within the group, structuring

opportunities for everyone to participate, active participation by all group members, and actively listening to one another. The salient norms of interpretation for this event include seeing one another as resources for the group so that it is important that group members attend to each other's speech. Further, the meanings created in this event are framed by the small group task (i.e., collaboratively research content-based learning and plan a presentation for classmates). Finally, the genre that is created in this meeting is the educational discussion group with its particular institutional setting, limited number of participants, task assigned by an instructor, and peer membership.

We now turn to an analysis of turn-taking in the collaborative dialogue speech event in order to gain some insight into participation in this speech event: Who talks? How much do they talk? and how is turn-taking organized in this event?

Turn-Taking

Participation of all group members is foundational for collaborative work. The groups are organized around equal status peers and according to the course instructor, each member is to be considered a valued resource. If a group member does not participate, the group is deprived of their contribution. In addition, one of the issues present in both this group and the course as a whole is the emphasis

on experiencing a truly collaborative group experience. Table 4 presents an analysis of the local economy of turns evident in this speech event.

Table 4

Distribution of Turns in the Collaborative Dialogue

	Student	Turns of Talk	Air Time[2]
1.	Danielle	25	122
2.	Lisa	27	112
3.	Adrea	30	108
4.	Francis	12	67
5.	Nick	13	20
6.	Sachi	11	16

It is clear from this table that three group members--Danielle, Lisa, and Adrea--controlled by far the most turns and air time. In fact, in terms of air time, each of these three women talk more than Sachi, Nick and me combined. Nick and Sachi's participation lags far behind these three group members. What are we to make of this?

It is important to note that the fact that some members talked more than others is not in itself evidence that this was not a collaborative group. It is not possible to assess the degree of collaboration solely on the basis of a measure of number of turns. However, it is curious that three group members would dominate so thoroughly this first speech event in this meeting. It also raises questions about the roles Sachi and Nick are

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2. "Air time" refers to the total number of lines of transcript spoken by a person.

playing in this group. My own level of participation was institutionally constrained in many ways as the facilitators in this course were encouraged to talk less in group discussions in order to free other group members to participate more fully. (It is gratifying to see that I actually did talk less in this meeting, as I had intended.)

The voice framework provides a warrant for examining a number of factors that may promote one individual's voice over another. For example, one person may find it easier to gain the floor than another. Or the topic may empower the full participation of one group member while silencing another. Or whenever one person speaks no one listens while another, higher status member, gains immediate attention from group members.

In order to understand the implications of turn-taking represented in Table 4, it is important to understand how group members gained the floor in this particular meeting. The vast majority of turns (78%) are of the category "self-selection." That is, a member gains the floor by jumping in at the end of another person's turn of talk.

However, as we have seen, group members do structure turns of talk for one another through general questions, meaning negotiation, and direct solicitations. These techniques for structuring the floor for one another are, I believe, the local enactment of an important aspect of collaborative dialogue. The willingness of group members to ensure a space for others to join the dialogue and

negotiate common understandings is an important part of the collaborative process.

I first analyze the local techniques for turn allocation by the speaker which are found in this meeting. In other words, I am interested in looking at ways that the person who has the floor structures opportunities for another person to gain the floor. The following are the techniques for structuring a turn of talk found in this speech event:

1. General question to the group

2. Solicitation of an individual turn of talk:
   a) Direct solicitation
   b) Meaning negotiation
   c) Elaboration

All of these techniques for structuring turn-taking typically use a question form and can be viewed as "adjacency pairs."[3]

The first category of turn structuring is the general question which both nominates a topic and provides a slot for one (or more) of the other group members to respond. The speech event "collaborative dialogue" begins with the following general question:

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3. A question comprises the first part of what Sacks et al. (1974) call "adjacency pairs." Adjacency pairs are sequential units in which the first conversational move by a speaker triggers a response from a conversational partner. Hence, a question is a reliable way to structure a turn of talk for another group member.

Excerpt 1*[4]

26 **Lisa:** So does anybody have any topic ideas?
27 (2)
28 **Adrea:** I did um I was thinking like mythology might
29 be a fun one to do ....

Lisa's question raises a topic that will become the principal subject of this meeting: What kind of content should the group use in creating a lesson in their presentation? The question provides a slot for Adrea to suggest mythology as a possible content type. Lisa's question also provides slots later in the discussion for Nick and Lisa herself to make their own content suggestions.

The second category of turn allocation is solicitation which has three distinct techniques in this meeting. "Direct solicitation" is used frequently by group members with Sachi but infrequently with other group members. In this example, Lisa solicits a turn of talk for Sachi:

Excerpt 2*

255 **Lisa:** Did you want to say something? Were you you
256 looked like you were trying to say something.=
257 **Sachi:** =No ha=
258 **Lisa:** =You're not. Okay.

Sachi declines to join the discussion on this occasion.

Later on, Lisa solicits two turns for her:

Excerpt 3*

474 **Lisa:** ... What do you think Sachi? You're being
475 quiet tonight.
476 (2)
477 (laughter)

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4. Excerpts from the transcript in Appendix B are marked with an asterisk.

478 (1)
479 **Sachi:** I think um I think um yeah I would rather like
480 to decide what ha what audience was
481 (1)
482 **?:** ()
483 **Lisa:** Wait say what you said /()
484 **Sachi:** /Who who are students really um
485 **Nick:** /Yeah who who is the audience
486 **Danielle:** /Yeah
487 **Lisa:** /Who are the students=

Sachi uses the turn of talk structured by Lisa in lines 474-475 to return to her central theme of the evening: Who are the students for this lesson the group is planning? Sachi was interested in determining what types of students (e.g., ESL or mainstream, elementary or secondary) the group had in mind for the lesson they were planning. She had brought this topic up at the very beginning of this meeting and it was discussed in this meeting without resolution. We return to this topic for careful analysis below.

Lisa actually structures two turns of talk for Sachi in Excerpt 3, first in lines 474-475 and again in line 483. This exchange also has interesting elements of "hearing" from group members, as Lisa, in line 483, tells Sachi to "say what you said" and then echoes Sachi's response in line 487. The first is a personal reference hearing and the second an ideational reference hearings. Nick's response in line 485 and Danielle's in 486 function as evaluative hearings.

Third, an important turn-taking technique used in this meeting is <u>meaning negotiation</u>.

Excerpt 4*

100 **Nick:** =I was just going to ask what do you mean from
101 two directions?=
102 **Sachi:** =um (.) say like you can do this as a regular
103 social studies class ....

In this example, Nick asks Sachi to clarify a previous comment. Meaning negotiation structures a turn of talk for another group member which allows them an opportunity to expand upon and clarify a previous turn of talk. It both signals a lack of understanding on the part of a listener and structures another turn of talk for the speaker.

As I argued in Chapter 3, meaning negotiation is also reflective of the particular speech event in which it is embedded. People do not simply initiate meaning negotiation every time that they have not understood someone. Crucially, in this context, meaning negotiation is triggered by the purpose of the speech event and the social relations between group members.

The purpose of this speech event is primarily twofold. First, to explore the group topic of content-based learning. Second, to plan the group presentation. Both of these goals are to be done collaboratively. Nick's negotiation of meaning is a collaborative move to understand Sachi's contribution to the planning which also signals that he values her participation.

A speech act such as a request for information used in a meaning negotiation question also reveals the social roles being taken on in this setting (Rosaldo, 1990). In order for Nick to ask for clarification, he must consider

it within his group role to do so. He is positioning Sachi as being a valued resource for the group and he is positioned also as a collaborative group member (see Sachi's analysis of this type of solicitation in Chapter 6).

The third technique for solicitation is <u>elaboration</u>. It is used as a follow up to an idea or suggestion by a group member in order to provide an opportunity for that group member to talk further on a particular point. The following is an example of this technique.

<u>Excerpt 5</u>*

272 **Adrea:** How do you envision us doing that [music] in class?
273 (1)
274 **Nick:** Well I don't think that I got quite that far ha
275 with it ....

In this stretch of talk, Adrea structures a turn of talk for Nick by asking him to elaborate on his suggestion to use "music" as the content of the presentation lesson. While he is not able to add much to his original idea, the point that I am making here is that group members did structure turns of talk for one another, in essence, treating one another as "resources" for the group. This interchange also shows that Nick enacting his role as a newcomer to teaching as he is unable to generate on-the-spot a lesson plan.

In sum, I have shown some of the principle ways that turns are structured for other group members by a speaker. These techniques of turn allocation provide critical

information about the structure of the group discourse--collaborative discourse. If we are looking for evidence for how collaboration is organized in this group meeting, I would propose that evidence of widespread structuring of turns of talk by speakers for other group members is an important feature to note. Providing opportunities for others to gain the floor in order to suggest a new topic, negotiate the meaning of a previous turn of talk, or elaborate on a previous statement is collaborative behavior. However, while it is commonplace in this meeting for a speaker to select other members to speak, the most common way to gain the floor is through self-selection.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of the structure of turn allocation in this speech event.

Table 5

Structure of Turn Allocation

Member	Self-Selection	General Question	Solicited[5]
Lisa	25	1	1
Danielle	19	3	3
Adrea	26	2	2
Nick	9	2	2
Francis	9	0	3
Sachi	4	0	6[6]
Total	92 (78%)	8 (7%)	17 (15%)

5. The category "solicited" includes all instances of direct solicitation, meaning negotiation, and elaboration.

6. Sachi had 11 turns of talk in this speech event. However, for one turn of talk it is not known how she gained the floor as the audio tape was being turned over and no record was made.

Table 5 indicates that self-selection is the most common way for members to gain the floor as 78% of all the turns in this event were gained in this manner. However, solicitations were also a common way to gain the floor with 15% of all the turns solicited by a speaker for a particular group member.

Sachi was a frequent recipient of these solicitations. Out of her total of eleven turns of talk, six were solicited by other group members. No other group member comes close to this ratio of solicitations to number of turns of talk. For example, if we compare Nick who talked at about the same rate as Sachi in this section of the meeting, he had only two solicitations out of thirteen turns of talk.

I think this is significant for two reasons. First, it suggests that group members did attempt to bring Sachi into the conversation. They not only directly solicited her participation but also attempted to clarify the meaning of what she said when she did speak. As I suggested in the previous chapter, these solicitations were not always welcomed by Sachi and this is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6.

Secondly, this data suggests that Sachi's less active participation level was not due to her inability to gain access to the floor. Numerous turns of talk were structured for her and she gained the floor on her own on several occasions. Further, she has indicated to me that

she felt she could get the floor if she wanted to in this meeting.

Summary of Analysis. This analysis of turn-taking highlights the following facts:

1. Speaking was not equally distributed in this meeting. Danielle, Adrea, and Lisa dominate the meeting in terms of both turns taken and air time. The possible reasons for this are discussed below.

2. The lesser participation of Nick and Sachi does not appear to be directly related to their inability to gain the floor. They both had access to the floor.

3. Sachi is treated differently than other group members in terms of gaining the floor. Over fifty percent of her turns of talk are structured by other group members. For example, Nick, who has comparable number of turns of talk, does not have turns structured for him at this rate. A course norm of using group members as resources and particularly of engaging international students in the collaborative group work is strikingly evident here. Sachi's "differences" are discussed in Chapter 6.

4. One of the features of this collaborative discourse is turn-structuring by a current speaker for another member of the group as all members had turns structured by other group members. Collaboration requires the active participation of all group members. We can see in these data that efforts were made by the group to create a discourse pattern which provided access to the floor for

all. It is one of the ways that collaboration was enacted in this social setting.

Speaking and Hearing

The second step in this analysis of voice is a focus on two critical components of group members' talk: the actual speech of group members and the ways that group members signal that they have heard one another. In this analysis of speech, I focus on the topics discussed, the warrants for voice provided by particular forms of knowledge, and the types of speech acts performed. These three components provide insight into the organization of speech in this setting

The assumption that I am making here is that the particular social dynamics that create this particular speech event--the institutionally organized task, the (short) history of the group, and the particular group members present--constrain the types of subjects discussed, knowledge utilized, and speech acts invoked and this has implications for the participation of group members. In order to better understand the co-construction of voice in this meeting, I analyze the participation of two group members: Adrea and Sachi. They both made suggestions that influenced the course of this speech event but as we shall see with very different results.

The Voice of Adrea. I begin with Adrea, who is a very active member of the group. The following short excerpt

from the very early stages of this meeting is analyzed in terms of the warrants for talk she constructs, the speech act she invokes, and the types of hearings that she receives from other group members.

Excerpt 6*

Lisa: So does anybody have any topic ideas?
(2)
Adrea: I did um I was thinking like mythology might be a fun one to do. um maybe um assign as a homework um assign people to go to the library and look up a myth. Be like the creation myth of one um unfamiliar culture and then think of their own culture myth and their own own religion or culture and then we could work with that as our content matter you know for our content part of the class um have them together in groups and uh sharing their myths and then maybe doing some of the um mental gymnastics type things that the book recommended like categorizing uh making generalization about the myths that they have like um across a lot of creation myths there is similar aspects and then maybe discuss and speculate on why myths are and you know religion included in myths and you know wh wh what purpose do they provide in society. So there'd be like um it would be a communicative thing and it would be um based on partly based on what they already know you know from their own experiences but um it could also be you know it could also be practicing some necessary sort of school skills like categorization group work and discussion
Nick: ummhuh
Adrea: and then uh maybe hopefully be a little bit higher order thinking like a little bit you know instead of being very concrete you could go on to a more theoretical level.=
Danielle: =That's great the funny thing I went to a social studies high school class last week and that's what they were doing.=

This discussion, involving the three most active members of the group, provides data for explaining how voice is co-constructed in this particular setting. Lisa, in line 26, structures a series of turns of talk with a general question about the type of content or "topic ideas" the group should plan a presentation around. Remember that

this was the idea that she suggested in the third group meeting and successfully "pushed" to get onto the agenda for this meeting.

Adrea's suggestion, which was clearly thought up in the intervening week since the last meeting, is to use mythology as the content which, as we have seen, is ultimately used in the presentation. Her stretch of talk is illuminating for what it tells us about the warrants for talk that she is orienting to. As I argued in Chapter 4, the rationales proffered to explain an idea or suggestion are rich data for understanding the shared understandings among participants in a social scene. The tracking of her explanation of how she would structure a lesson around mythology provides a window into the local perspectives on issues such as knowledge acquisition (or learning) and educational activities. I assume that Adrea is offering these explanations because she thinks they will be both comprehensible and persuasive.

Adrea suggests a lesson in which students would use three sources of knowledge. First, students can "look up" in a library an unfamiliar creation myth. Hence, knowledge can be gained from authors. Second, students can use their own personal knowledge of "their own culture myth." Third, students can then "share" their knowledge of myths with one another. In other words, communal knowledge can be utilized.

Do these forms of knowledge look familiar? They are identical to the forms of knowledge used in the course. They come directly from the Methods course and its Whole Language principles and supporting course texts. I am <u>not</u> claiming that Adrea was incapable of planning this lesson prior to enrolling in the methods class. However, I am claiming that the social context created through this course--its task-based organization, collaborative norms, and Whole Language principles--provide a social context in which her ideas would make sense and be accepted by other group members. Adrea used her turn of talk to make a <u>suggestion</u> which she believed would make sense to other group members.

Mythology's appeal to this group is largely based upon the fact that it would allow students to use their own experiences, since everybody knows some myths, and it is intrinsically cultural and, hence, the cultural backgrounds of group members can be foregrounded. It is a happy blend of personal and cultural which was highly valued within the group (and course).

Her further remarks on a possible lesson plan are grounded in the conceptual system developed in the Mohan text. The book referred to in line 38 is the Mohan text and she uses his particular vocabulary to describe activities that could be a part of the lesson such as "categorizing" and "making generalization[s]" with the

groups' myths. She then suggests the lesson could move on to "higher order thinking skills."

Crucially, she cites three rationales for her lesson. First, the lesson would be "communicative" which is a key idea in Whole Language (and a host of other communicative approaches to teaching). Second, the lesson would be based partly on what the students already know. As we have seen, this is consistent with Whole Language and the Methods course in general. Third, the lesson would allow for students to practice "school skills" (e.g., categorization, group work, higher order thinking). I am assuming that "school skills" is a paraphrase of CALP. This rationale is embedded in the Mohan text and other readings the group did for their research on content-based learning.

It is also important to keep in mind that the overarching frame that makes this dialogue cohere is the twin foundations of the group's task and Whole Language principles. What I find interesting about this discussion is not only what gets argued about and negotiated but perhaps more importantly, what is accepted by the group as "given" as part of the discourse pool of background knowledge. The "given" aspects of the talk are simply another way to phrase the local warrants for talk. For example, the three types of knowledge to be utilized in a lesson--expert, personal, and communal--are simply assumed to be reasonable in this setting.

Danielle's response to Adrea's suggestions in lines 56-58 is positive and constitutes a form of hearing. She first positively evaluates Adrea's suggestions and then connects it to her own experience with a social studies class that she was observing. Again we have a warrant for speaking based upon personal experience.

This brief excerpt of talk at the very beginning of this meeting provides insights into how turns are structured, the types of knowledge drawn on by speakers, and the way that group members hear one another. As we saw above, early in this meeting, Adrea suggests that the group use mythology as the content of a lesson for the presentation. What evidence is there that she was heard?

The answer is that there is an array of evidence in the data that she was heard. Group members created seventeen intertextual links (hearings) between Adrea's suggestion to use mythology and their own turns of talk within this speech event. This included six positive evaluations (e.g., Danielle: That's great! Lisa: I love that mythology idea. Nick: I like the mythology idea.), a request by Sachi for Adrea to elaborate on her suggestion, and ten additional lexical uses of "myth/mythology" in subsequent discourse. In other words, there is an abundance of evidence that Adrea's suggestion was taken up by other group members and woven into the fabric of the group dialogue.

At the level of action, the group structured an entire speech event (analyzed below) around brainstorming ideas on mythology. In addition, Adrea's idea is ultimately used as the content of the lesson in the presentation. Adrea's nomination of mythology was heard. She had a voice in this meeting.

The Voice of Sachi. The voice of Sachi in this meeting is more complex to track. As I noted above, Sachi had one overriding contribution to the collaborative dialogue section of this meeting. She returned time after time to raise the issue of the type of class and second language students the group wanted to plan their presentation around.

Her first attempt to introduce this topic came very early in the meeting:

Excerpt 7*

(5)
Sachi: I'm I'm not with the reading so um but I'm wondering if you are going to do this from ESL point of view?
(1)
Adrea: Yeah ....

Sachi begins with a ritual disclaimer about the fact that she has not kept up with the reading and then asks a question which would preoccupy her for much of the meeting. Adrea answers this question by saying that she had been thinking of an regular ESL class with "middle level" students (i.e., intermediate language proficiency). Sachi then self-selects a turn of talk and restates her question.

Excerpt 8*

Sachi: Yeah but uh my question is maybe you can tell me two (.) two approaches/()
Danielle: /Yeah mmhuh
Sachi: something like that and uh: (.) if we could do both approach to the (.) same (.) area or do or do we have to concentrate on one (.) direction?
(1)
Lisa: /There's no have to's about anything.[7]
Nick: / ()
Lisa: Excuse me go ahead.=
Nick: =I was just going to ask what do you mean from two directions?=
Sachi: =um (.) say like you can do this as a regular social studies class but (.) but uh (.) but to help like ESL student /and
Lisa: /Right: mmhuh
Sachi: this conduct content ha uh then you can do it as an ESL class
?: mmhuh
Sachi: but in the process of learning language
?: mmhuh
Sachi: but it has con ()
Danielle: Yeah I would like to make a plea for the first one I mean I think I agree I like what you brought up that you know before we talked about two things either we have an ESL class whose goal is an ESL class or we have an ESL social studies class in a high school ....

Sachi's rather cryptic question in lines 90-91 initiates hearing responses by both Lisa and Nick. In line 97 Lisa comments on one aspect of Sachi's question--whether the group is required to follow one particular approach to selecting a target class. Lisa's comment, an answer to (at least part of) Sachi's question, is an ideational hearing response. That is, Lisa's comment is directly linked to Sachi's turn of talk by both being a response to her

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7. This is a statement of one of the norms of this course: The groups are free to create their own presentation as they see fit. However, in an interview Sachi interpreted this comment in terms of how it positioned her in relation to Lisa: child to parent. See Chapter 6 for a full discussion.

question and maintaining a common reference through the use of identical lexical items (i.e., "have to").

Nick uses his turn to structure an additional turn of talk for Sachi in lines 100-101 by asking her to clarify her previous comment. This "meaning negotiation" is also a signal that she is being heard. Note also how Nick uses the exact words--"from two directions"--that Sachi used, an ideational type of hearing. The back channel responses in lines 92, 105, and 108, and 110 provide verbal support for Sachi's turn and signal attention to the speaker. Her elaboration in lines 102-111 highlights one of the central controversies in second language education: Should students with limited proficiency in English be placed in a mainstream class studying a subject like social studies or should they be placed in an ESL class and focus on learning English?

Danielle's response starting in line 112 is a form of hearing of Sachi as she responds to Sachi's question by arguing for the first of Sachi's two alternatives (i.e., focusing on a regular social studies class with ESL students). Her response clearly indicates that she has heard Sachi by referring to the "first one" of Sachi's two alternatives. She also creates an intertextual link with Sachi's previous turn of talk by agreeing with and positively evaluating Sachi's distinction between the two types of language classes.

This example clearly shows the co-construction of voice for Sachi. This excerpt also demonstrates that Sachi speaks English as a second language and her speech is not always immediately clear to her fellow group members. As this interaction suggests, however, this did not prevent her (with help from others) from getting, at least, a substantial aspect of her message out.[8]

Adrea and Danielle took up Sachi's distinction between an ESL class and a regular subject area class with ESL students. Adrea disagreed with the distinction and argued that all classes are content classes. Danielle counters that the distinction is important as different classes have different purposes with important differences between adult learners and public school students. Adrea concedes the point. As their disagreement winds down, Lisa solicits a turn for Sachi who declines to make a comment (see Excerpt 2). The discussion then turns to a suggestion by Nick to use music as the content for the presentation.

Several minutes later, Lisa again solicits Sachi:

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8. This is an example of how a poor performance of a turn of talk by a particular group member does not necessarily prevent that person from being heard if other group members are willing to actively structure opportunities for clarification, another turn of talk, etc. Crucially, the purpose of the task, the social relations among participants, etc. (i.e., the speech event) is responsible for this type of discourse structure. If a person truly values the participation of another person, it is likely that he/she will find a way to understand that speaker.

Excerpt 9*

474 **Lisa:** ... What do you think Sachi? You're being
475 quiet tonight.
476 (2)
477 (laughter)
478 (1)
479 **Sachi:** I think um I think um yeah I would rather like
480 to decide what ha what audience was
481 (1)
482 **?:** ()
483 **Lisa:** Wait say what you said /()
484 **Sachi:** /Who who are students really um
485 **Nick:** /Yeah who who is the audience
486 **Danielle:** /Yeah
487 **Lisa:** /Who are the students=
488 **Sachi:** =( )=
489 **Danielle:** = I think I think what Francis said about
490 the class is really our students is is pretty
491 important ....

Lisa structures a turn of talk for Sachi with a direct solicitation in line 474. Sachi responds by again raising her question for the third time about the type of class which is being targeted in this lesson. This question structures turns of talk for members of the group. Notice also that the warrant for such a question derives directly from the group task of preparing a presentation.

In line 483 Lisa both structures another turn of talk for Sachi and provides an intertextual hearing of a previous turn of talk by Sachi: "... say what you said." The warrant for this turn, like Lisa's previous one is the collaborative norm of viewing members as resources. In other words, it makes sense for Lisa to ask Sachi this question since Sachi has been "quiet" and there is a norm of active participation in this setting. Sachi in line 484 echoes her own words from earlier in the meeting concerning the ESL students in the presentation lesson. The warrant

for this topic is the same as her previous comment: The task.

Nick in line 485, Danielle in line 486, and Lisa in line 487 simultaneously signal that they hear and support Sachi's comments. Nick uses Sachi's term of "audience" from line 480, while Lisa echoes the exact words of Sachi in line 487. Both are ideational types of hearing. In lines 489-492, Danielle signals an intertextual link by using my name (a personal reference hearing) with my own previous comment about not losing sight of the fact that the real students that they are teaching are their classmates in the Methods course. She also provides a type of discourse cohesion hearing for Sachi in that the topic Sachi introduces is continued in her turn of talk. She does this through the phrase "the class is really our students." This phrase links her comments directly to the concerns of Sachi.

In sum, we can see that Sachi's voice is co-constructed in a number of ways in this short interchange. Turns are structured for her by Lisa. The social context of this educational setting provides a warrant for her comments on the students the group is discussing. Finally, group members hear her in a variety of ways. The rich set of discursive resources that I have identified as crucial to voice are evident in this transcript. Sachi gains the floor, speaks on a topic that has a warrant in this meeting, and is publicly "heard" by others.

Was Sachi heard? The answer is complex but ultimately I believe that she was not. There are multiple hearings of Sachi's questions in this meeting. There are two examples of meaning negotiation, eight distinct intertexual links by group members to Sachi's comments established either through the use of her name (or a pronoun) or through a direct reference to the ideas that she introduced. In addition, there are the one positive evaluation of her idea and two collaborative completions which we just reviewed in Excerpt 9. In short, Sachi's comments are taken up in the discourse, much as was Adrea's myth suggestion.

Yet, Sachi told me in a meeting a week after the group meeting that she had felt that her question had gotten lost in the group discussion. Why did Sachi not feel heard on this topic? In order to answer this question we need to look at the speech act being invoked by Sachi in these turns of talk. It is clear in hindsight that what Sachi actually intended by her turns of talk was for a <u>decision</u> to be made concerning the class type and student level for the presentation lesson. In other words, her turns of talk can be seen as a <u>request</u> to the group to decide on the issues of students and class type <u>before</u> choosing a content area.

The group picked up on her general topic but failed to realize the function of her speech. Her third attempt to raise this issue (Excerpt 9) is the clearest articulation by her of her intent as she states, "I would rather decide

what ha audience was." However, the group did not recognize Sachi's speech act and hence, did not act on her request.

I base this conclusion on a number of facts. First, the language Sachi used in her third attempt to bring this issue up to the group clearly indicates language consistent with this interpretation. Second, in the Process meeting a week later, the group looked at a page of transcript from the fourth group meeting which contained Excerpt 9, analyzed above. When Sachi was asked in the Process meeting about that turn, she replied:

Excerpt 10

279 **Sachi:** Oh: this time I said what I really felt. I
280 mean I really thought that we needed to decide who who
281 () to who we are going to address this class .... none
282 of you really thought it was necessary
283 **Danielle:** Didn't we go on to talk about that?

In this excerpt from the Process meeting, we have a clear statement of how Sachi viewed the communicative intent of her questions in the previous meeting. She viewed her turns of talk as being a request for action. The lack of action by the group was interpreted by her as a negative response to her request: "None of you really thought it was necessary." Danielle's comment captures the fact that she felt that the group did discuss Sachi's topic. As I have shown, the transcript does bear out Danielle's assertion. However, what we did not understand was that Sachi wanted more than an airing of views.

How, as a group, did we fail to comprehend Sachi's request? The answer to this question provides insights into the local creation of voice. I can imagine three possible hypotheses for why Sachi was not heard: (1) The group did not find Sachi's speech comprehensible, (2) they did not value the point that she was raising, that is, it had no warrant in this setting, (3) the (implicit) structure of the discourse operating in this group--that one must "push through" one's ideas--proved a barrier for the group hearing Sachi's request.

The first hypothesis, that Sachi's speech was not comprehensible, does not seem reasonable. In particular, the third time she brought this issue up she clearly articulated what she thought needed to be done when she stated, "I would rather like to decide what ha audience was...." A turn later she clarified any ambiguity around her term of "audience," clearly identifying it with students.

The second hypothesis is also not borne out by the data. In the Process meeting, we examined a page of transcript which included Excerpt 9. Sachi commented on this turn of talk:

Excerpt 11

328 **Sachi:** ... unless we decide on who's really going to
329 do this lesson to then I think I thought it was kind
330 of useless to talk about what subject we should pick.
331 **Nick:** That's the way I felt....

This comment by Sachi is revealing in a number of ways. First, it shows that she has the English language

ability to express herself clearly on this topic. Second, it provides data that shows that Sachi did intend to make a request for a decision. Third, it clearly indicates that Sachi is quite capable of articulating her rationale for her request. That rationale is simply that the first step to consider in lesson planning is the students, not the content. Nick immediately endorses this rationale. It is a rationale that would meet no opposition in this setting as it is consistent with many of the basic principles of the course. It had a warrant in this setting. Hence, hypothesis number two is untenable.

Hypothesis three is more promising. Was there some type of underlying discourse structure for requesting that the group make a decision? I think that there may have been. In examining Sachi's three attempts to bring this issue up, I notice that she never links her questions with a rationale for why it is important to first decide the type of class and students before deciding on the content. In other words, she did not, as she did in the Process meeting, state why her suggestion is important.

In contrast, when Lisa, in the third group meeting, made a suggestion that the group quickly choose a content topic to build a presentation around, she first made it clear to the group that she was asking for a decision:

Excerpt 12

250 **Lisa:** ... I think we should choose a subject that we
251 all want to do ....

Hence, the group had to respond. While Lisa was immediately met with opposition from Adrea and Danielle, she argued for her suggestion with multiple reasons for deciding on this issue (e.g., preparation for an experiential lesson and channel search for materials). And while the group decided to postpone the decision until the fourth meeting, as we have seen, Lisa was ultimately successful in getting the group to put her suggestion on the agenda for this meeting.

Sachi, on the other hand, did not clearly signal to the group that she wanted a decision made until her third attempt to raise this issue. And she also did not provide any reasons why this was an important decision. The point that I am making here is not that Sachi was deficient. Sachi's muted voice in this meeting was interactionally accomplished by the group. Sachi doggedly tried to request that a decision be made by the group. The group failed to comprehend and act on that request. While the topic that she raised was quickly picked up and discussed, the underlying speech act was not. Further, although she did raise the issue three times, she did not "push" her request by stating reasons that would persuade group members to make a decision.

I am struck by the incongruity of Sachi's belief that the group had not thought such a decision needed to be made and Nick's response cited above that he actually agreed with her that the first step in planning the presentation

lesson should be identifying the students and teaching context. In other words, it is clear that Nick did not reject Sachi's request. I believe that Nick and other group members did not even recognize Sachi's turns of talk as a request for a decision. I know that I did not at that time. So we are left with evidence that the breakdown in communication was not related to Sachi's language ability (i.e., grammar or vocabulary) or opposition to what she was proposing. I believe that the breakdown was at the level of discourse.

I am assuming that Sachi believed that she was, in Grice's (1975) terms, providing sufficient "quantity" and "perspicuity" of information for the group to understand her request. In other words, I have presented evidence that Sachi believed that she had made a request and the group had, by default, not agreed with her.[9] As it turned out, the rest of the group had not recognized her talk as a request. While the group did structure turns of talk for Sachi and attempt to negotiate the meaning of Sachi's talk, they did not recognize what she was trying to accomplish and, hence, did not respond.

This incident provides crucial data on a host of issues centered around voice and collaborative dialogue.

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9. A request is the first part of an "adjacency pair" (Sacks et al., 1974). (See footnote 3). From Sachi's perspective, whatever way group members respond to her turn of talk, including silence, is seen as a response to her request. Hence, the failure of the group to decide or even debate Sachi's request would be seen by Sachi as a rejection of her request.

First, when attempting to understand voice, it is important to track not only turn-taking and hearings but also the speech act(s) that the speaker is invoking. As we have seen, Sachi had access to the floor and the group responded to what they believed she had said. Second, the organization of collaborative dialogue in this meeting suggests that in order for the group to be moved to actually focus on an issue and make a decision requires that a group member both explicitly request a decision be made on a specific topic and perhaps to defend that request by providing a (persuasive) rationale for making the decision.

It is my belief that Sachi's muted voice in this setting was quite likely a result of cross-cultural miscommunication. Sachi's rather <u>oblique</u> way of making a request, consistent with a Japanese pattern of discourse (Watanabe, 1990), was not understood by the American group members. It is interesting to note that in the Process meeting Sachi's comments, quoted in Excerpt 10, above, triggered a discussion by Adrea in which she argued that Sachi failed to "push" her ideas through. It is now clearer just how pushing might be accomplished in this setting.

However, the bottom line is that Sachi was not fully heard in this setting and my analysis points toward differing cultural discourse systems as the reason she was not heard. What is intriguing about this example is that

Sachi's muted voice cannot be linked to turn-taking (she had ample opportunities to speak), her command of sentence level English linguistic knowledge, or the willingness of group members to listen to her talk and incorporate it into the group discourse. And yet, she was still not fully heard. This business of constructing voice in a multicultural setting is an exceedingly complex affair!

In sum, collaborative dialogue in this meeting produced unequal levels of participation and voice among group members. As we have seen, group members did have access to the floor, used the knowledge structured by the course, task, and, for some, their own personal experiences to provide warrants for them to enter the discussion. Group members used a rich system of intertextual links to signal that the speech of group members was being heard and considered. The frequency of turn structuring for one another is one clear way that the collaborative norms are enacted in this meeting.

Sachi's experience in this speech event highlights the complexities of voice in a cross-cultural setting. I would like to note two components unearthed in this meeting. First, even when group members value the participation of their peers, an individual's voice can be silenced. I believe that Sachi's muted voice came as the direct result of cross-cultural miscommunication. Second, the use of a written transcript of this fourth meeting in the Process meeting provided a forum for some of these issues to be

raised and resolved. It proved to be a very helpful format for identifying and then discussing communication problems.

The type of speech event constructed in the group meetings can also impact on the participation of group members. The Brainstorm speech event provides an interesting contrast to the collaborative dialogue discussed above.

Brainstorming: A New Speech Event

Two-thirds of the way through the fourth Content group meeting, there was a major shift in the organization of the discussion as the group decided to brainstorm possible content topics on Adrea's theme of mythology. A Brainstorm is a particular type of speech event in which participants freely nominate ideas on a central theme. Pearson and Nelson (1979) identify four rules governing brainstorming:

1. Don't criticize any ideas.
2. No idea is too wild.
3. Quantity is important.
4. Seize opportunities to improve or add to ideas suggested by others.

As these rules suggest, the structure of a Brainstorm promotes the rapid generation of ideas around a central theme. Since even a bad or wild idea can spark a useful idea from someone else, brainstorming is organized so that no one argues or criticizes anyone's ideas. The thrust is

to nominate as many ideas as possible in a short time. That list can then be discussed and used as a resource.

Many of the elements of this speech event are identical to collaborative dialogue. The participants are the same as is the physical site. However, the purpose of this speech event is to generate a list (or "web") of myths that could potentially be used in a lesson on mythology. The structure of the discourse also was quite different from the previous speech event.

The interactional patterns of this speech event are not the same as the previous discussion. There are no arguments about any nomination for the semantic web. Anyone who comments after a member has nominated a topic provides a positive evaluation (or comment or re-saying). Nor are there any references to texts or ideas connected with the course. The warrant for entering the conversation is personal knowledge with no intertextual links with outside texts. In addition, new topics are continually generated which is, of course, the whole point of the exercise. Finally, the key of this speech event was much lighter than the previous collaborative dialogue as it had its share of laughter, off the topic comments, and at times, just plain silliness which was absent from the previous collaborative dialogue.

Discourse Structure of Brainstorming

The structure of the Brainstorm was organized around the nominations for the web. The nominations on some aspect of mythology (e.g., "creation myths,""Chinese myths," "Big Bang") were followed by a positive (never negative) evaluation, comment, or by a request for clarification. Lisa in her role as secretary wrote the nominations down on paper. The following is an example, Nick nominating "the flood" as an example of a myth:

Excerpt 13*

921 **Nick:** =The flood (2) you know I think most cultures
922 have a (2) /myth concerning that=
923 **Lisa:** /ah: so like destruction
924 **Nick:** mmmm
925 **Lisa:** total destruction so it's like the opposite of
926 creation
927 **Nick:** mmm

Nick's nomination of the myth of the flood in line 921 is followed by a paraphrase (and expansion) by Lisa, which is followed by Nick's back channel support for her paraphrase. Typically, a group member self-selects a turn, nominates a myth, and another member comments approvingly on that nomination.

In the following example, we see many of the elements which, I have argued, construct a voice--in this case, for Danielle:

Excerpt 14*

896 (2)
897 **Danielle:** What about like cultural myths? You know
898 the cultural perceptions myths=
899 **Lisa:** =How things came to be?=
900 **Nick:** =Right exact that's /just the phrase I was
901 thinking of

902 **Danielle:** /mmmm/mmm
903 **Adrea:** /Origins. (.) Is that what you mean?=
904 **Danielle:** =No but that's a good one. ha
905 (laughter)
906 I meant like misperceptions like you know /()
907 **Lisa:** /ah: myth myths ha=
908 **Danielle:** =Yeah like a cultural myth about a certain
909 group like stereotypes sort of you can branch all this
910 off each other misperceptions ha stereotypes.
911 (5)

We have Danielle nominating her topic in lines 897-898, then Lisa restating the idea with a questioning intonation which is designed to open a slot for Danielle to evaluate whether or not Lisa's restatement is accurate. This is an ideational reference type of hearing. This may be necessitated due to Lisa creating a visual record of these ideas. That turn is "stolen" by Nick who positively evaluates Lisa's comment, again, a type of hearing. Adrea attempts to clarify the meaning of Danielle's comment with a question in line 903. This question provides a type of meaning negotiation hearing and structures a slot for Danielle to respond.

Danielle begins first in line 904 by positively evaluating Adrea's paraphrase and then goes on to clarify her own comments. Pauses bracket this set of interchanges from the discussion before and after. Many of the coordinated moves which I have identified with collaborative voice are present in this example: Group members structure turns for one another, comment on and evaluate each other's turns of talk (i.e., hear one another), and attempt to negotiate the meaning of member's

talk. Danielle's voice is clearly co-constructed within this stretch of talk.

If we turn to the distribution of turns of talk and the number of nominations of myths in the Brainstorm we see the pattern shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Distribution of Talk in the Brainstorm

Name	Turns of Talk	Nominations
Lisa	32	8
Adrea	23	6
Danielle	19	5
Nick	15	5
Francis	15	4
Sachi	3	0

The turns of talk are generally more equally distributed when compared with the earlier speech event. Excluding, Lisa and Sachi, turns of talk for four of the group members are clustered between 15 and 23 turns. Particularly striking is Nick's elevated rate of participation as compared with the previous speech event. Lisa again dominated the number of turns, this time in part because in her role as recorder she often commented or negotiated the meaning of members' nominations. A number of her turns are directly related to getting the correct words down and making connections between ideas within the web. Importantly, Sachi plays virtually no role in this speech event. The sheer number of interactions is high in

a short period of time because this type of speech event is structured so that participants take short turns of talk.

One way to evaluate the voice that group members had in this part of the meeting is to look at the number of ideas or nominations that were recorded by Lisa from the discussion. Once again, Lisa was quite active with 8 nominations, the most by any group member. On the other end of the scale, Sachi had no nominations in the Brainstorm. The remaining four members' nominations were tightly clustered from four to six nominations. In contrast to the collaborative dialogue speech event, Nick's level of participation was quite high by this measurement.

Discussion of Brainstorm

The examination of the two speech events of this meeting reveals a number of factors in the voice of group members. First, the frame for voice which views voice as co-constructed by the group with a tripartite structure provides a frame for identifying the building blocks of voice. For example, the most obvious component of the turns of talk of the Brainstorm was the lack of participation by Sachi. While she may not have talked much in collaborative dialogue, during the Brainstorm her input is non-existent.

Nick's turns of talk, on the other hand, go up dramatically. In the first speech event he had only thirteen turns of talk which put him at the bottom (with

Sachi) of the group while in this speech event he has fifteen turns of talk which puts him in the thick of the discussion.

What is it about this speech event which effectively renders Sachi mute and seems to empower Nick? While the interactional structure of the discourse changes substantially in the Brainstorm, many of the collaborative elements are present. Members have continued to structure opportunities for others to speak. They attempt to clarify the meaning of each other's statements, evaluate others' ideas, refer back to a previous statement, etc. In a word, the interaction is still organized to provide a voice for participants and it is collaborative.

Nick's participation is much higher in this speech event than in the previous one. In the Process meeting, Nick notes that his lack of experience in the field of teaching and his "shy personality" are the reasons that he normally talks less than other group members. The fact that the Brainstorm privileges knowledge of mythology which is unconnected to teaching and which Nick seems to be well informed about provides the context in which he is able to fully participate. This highlights the importance that knowledge plays in structuring a voice for group members in small group discussions.[10]

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10. This also raises an interesting question about Nick's statement that he is a "shy" person. Did he suddenly have a shift in personality during the course of this meeting? Perhaps, personality is a function of social identity in a particular social context which a person finds themselves

The role of Sachi is fascinating in this speech event. She had really no participation in this discussion. She nominated no topics and contributed nothing to the discussion. The reason for this is also clear and is based upon two principal components. First, she viewed the topic of mythology differently than other group members did. For example, she did not consider myth as including religion or science and thought more along the lines of old stories about the gods. The other group members viewed myth in a rather expansive way to include not only religion but also elements of science and politics.

Secondly, Sachi had never been a participant in a Brainstorm before and she did not really know how it was organized. Brainstorming is a culturally organized form of talk. While the organization of the Brainstorm was apparent to the American group members--there were negotiations of its structure--it was not appropriate to Sachi. She had no experience with this form of talk and this seems to have inhibited her participation. Further, the rest of the group, all Americans (including me) assumed that this form of talk was common knowledge. This resulted in the complete absence of Sachi's voice in the group. When Sachi told me that she "missed a lot" in this meeting, it is now clear that she was talking about the Brainstorm.

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rather than a permanent state of being which is consistent across the varied roles, settings, and events of one's life.

The participation of Nick and Sachi in this speech event highlights two prominent interrelated factors in voice: Knowledge of discourse structure and knowledge of topic. The interactional structure of a speech event can silence group members who are unfamiliar with its organization. In addition, the type of knowledge used in a discussion can obviously have an impact upon the ability of particular group members to fully participate. Sachi's understanding of the term "mythology" was different enough from the rest of the group members, that she had difficulties in understanding the conversation.

Discussion of the Fourth Group Meeting

The fourth group meeting provides a rich source of data for exploring issues of participation, voice, and collaborative learning. It provides an empirical base for the voice framework introduced in Chapter 4 as that framework directed our exploration of turn-taking, speaking, and hearing as enacted in this meeting. Each of these steps of voice proved to useful in investigating how this group went about the task of collaboratively working together.

In this investigation, the following points have been established concerning the fourth group meeting:

1. **Co-construction of voice.** Voice was co-constructed by the group for members of the group through the interactional accomplishment of turns of talk for group

members and an active process of hearings. Group members had opportunities for both self-selecting turns and had turns structured for them. There is a rich system of hearing used in this meeting in which students' contributions were acknowledged and woven into the fabric of the group discourse.

Adrea's voice was co-constructed by group members in a wide variety of ways and she was an active member of this meeting (and all others). The examples of Adrea gaining the floor from a question asked by Lisa, through Adrea's suggestion of using mythology for the presentation content and her cogent rationale for structuring a lesson on this topic, and finally the multiple ways that the group signalled that they had heard and valued her suggestion provides a clear case of the co-construction of voice.

2. **Role of speech events in voice.** The two speech events analyzed in the fourth group meeting provided differential access to voice for **Sachi.** While Sachi was only partly heard in the collaborative dialogue, she was silent during the Brainstorm. The Collaborative dialogue provided opportunities for her to take the floor and raise an issue of concern. However, the group failed to recognize the request by her for a decision to be made on that issue. The Brainstorm's structure effectively silenced her.

Nick's participation was greatly increased in the brainstorming session. The knowledge required by the

brainstorming session provided Nick with both a topic that he knew well and was interested in. Plus, he was familiar with the structure of this speech event. Hence, he played an active role in that part of the meeting.

3. **Use of warrants by active participants.** Group members who were among the most active participants used a wide variety of warrants for entering the conversation: personal experiences, knowledge of outside readings, ideas from Whole Language or the course, and the ideas and suggestions of fellow group members. Further, the three most active members--Lisa, Danielle, and Adrea--often used turns of talk to comment on or argue for or against the ideas of fellow group members.

4. **Restricted use of warrants by least active participants.** The two least active members of the group--Sachi and Nick were both new to teacher education courses and teaching. They used a much narrower range of warrants for entering the conversation. In the collaborative dialogue section of the fourth group meeting, they did not use personal experience or course readings. They stayed out of the disagreements concerning other group members's ideas. Sachi focused primarily on a single issue and many of Nick turns were concerned with other group member's ideas.

I now turn from the focus on one group meeting to a discussion of larger issues that are central to collaborative learning. First, I discuss factors that

influence the participation of students in the Content group and present an argument for viewing participation in terms of voice. I then move on to discuss a critique of the small group learning that I introduced at the end of Chapter 3. Each of these discussions is informed by viewing them from the perspective of voice.

Participation and Voice in Collaborative Learning

A central focus of this research has been to better understand the participation of group members in collaborative learning. In this section, I would like to explore the participation of the following four members of the Content group: Adrea, Danielle, Nick, and Sachi.[11] I draw on data from the group meetings as well as interviews. I focus on the following set of interrelated factors to explore their participation in their group: (1) the co-construction of voice; (2) the role of topic and knowledge; (3) the types of warrants used in meetings; (4) speech events; (5) biographies of group members.

Adrea

Adrea was a very active participant in all of the group meetings. In the fourth group meeting, as I have demonstrated, she voiced her opinions and suggestions throughout that meeting. The data also shows that her

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11. I decided to focus only on the roles of four group members in order to focus the discussion in this section.

voice was interactionally structured in a variety of ways. Turns were structured for her which provided her with opportunities to make suggestions and elaborate on those suggestions.

She entered into the collaborative dialogue in a variety of ways. She drew on her personal knowledge of teaching and her reading of course texts. She expressed her opinions on other members' suggestions and structured turns of talk in order to clarify or elaborate on other members ideas. As I have shown, Adrea made a suggestion to use mythology as content for the group presentation with accompanying rationale and her suggestion was heard by the group.

It occurs to me that it is not surprising that a member like Adrea would play a robust role in a collaborative group organized around the type of task seen in this course. She is an experienced teacher who was taking the last semester of course work in the Master's program. Further, she had worked in collaborative groups in other classes, including one of Jerri's. Hence, the types of knowledge privileged in this meeting--both experiential (i.e., teaching and group work) and expert knowledge from course work provided a rich base for Adrea to enter into the group discourse.

In contrast to Adrea in many ways are Danielle and Nick. They are both newcomers to the teaching field and

the master's program. It is to a discussion of their roles in the group that we now turn.

Danielle

Danielle was quite active in the fourth meeting, as her total number of turns of talk and air time suggest. This was typical for her. How did she manage to participate so actively? She had no teaching experience and was at the very beginning of her formal study of education. However, she used her own personal experiences as a warrant to enter the group conversation. An important source of those experiences was the ESL classroom she was observing that term, an experience that Nick did not have.

Danielle used a wide array of warrants for entering the discussion. She drew upon her observations of a local high school ESL class, her readings of course texts (and outside readings), and her understanding of Whole Language. Further, she was willing to give her opinions on a range of topics and verbally disagree with ideas that she opposed. Danielle used her turns of talk to guide the group discussion to her (and Adrea's) agenda: Teaching ESL and social studies to secondary students. She was obviously effective in this endeavor as the final presentation focused on an ESL high school social studies class. Further, Danielle during the course of the semester took on more and more the role of "task master" as she often

encouraged the group to stay on task and she also kept track of time.

Nick

On the other hand, Nick's participation was much less than Danielle's, as we have seen in the fourth group meeting. The differences between the ways they participate in this meeting are instructive. Nick's lower number of turns is interesting in that one might expect that a white male would dominate these meetings as a host of research has consistently shown (Tannen, 1990). However, he does not. His own explanation of his low-level participation is based upon a lack of knowledge of teaching and the group topic combined with a shy personality.

Nick rarely uses personal experience to enter the group conversation. Since he had never taught before, that experience was not available to him and he was not observing ESL classes this term, so he could not draw upon that knowledge base.[12] While he clearly did the course readings, he did not often use this source of knowledge in the meetings either.

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12. One of my failings as a facilitator in the group was in not attempting to engage Nick in a discussion in the dialogue journal of his current experiences as a student in a Mandarin Chinese language class. I knew that Nick did not have much experience with second language teaching or learning but did not realize until the end of the term that his Chinese class could have been a rich experiential site for exploring many of the issues raised in the Methods course. Next time.

Nick often took a supportive role in the group. In the fourth group meeting, over half of Nick's 13 turns of talk are directly related to attending to others' speech. He negotiated meaning twice and provided confirmation or positive evaluation of other members' ideas on five occasions, in addition to making a suggestion to use music as content and expressing his opinions on current topics.

If we compare his turns of talk with Danielle's or Adrea's, unlike them he does not disagree with others or express his opinions about many of the subjects being discussed. Another clear distinction between them is the way that Nick has a constant refrain of verbal backchannel responses to support other's speech. These I believe function to express both the fact that he is attending to group talk and providing support for others' talk. Both Danielle and Adrea closely attended to the group discussions but they provided much less verbal support.

Nick does not seem to have a particular agenda that he is advocating. His study of teaching was still very much in the exploratory phase as he had not decided on the type of teaching situation he was to be involved with nor even made a definite commitment to teaching. Another difference is that Nick did not take on any particularly distinctive role in the group, except perhaps in terms of providing an attentive and supportive audience for other group members.

However, in the brainstorming session, Nick's participation was on a par with Danielle's. A shift in the

base of knowledge--from ESL lessons to mythology--resulted in a rather dramatic rise in the participation of Nick. This shows how context sensitive participation can be. If we want students to participate, we must carefully consider how to structure classes in ways that tap into their own interests and knowledge as warrants for participation.

In sum, Danielle's greater number of turns as compared with Nick in the fourth group meeting, which is consistent through the term, can be traced to her willingness to share her own knowledge of course texts, personal information gained from her observations of ESL classes, her role as task master, her interests in guiding the discussion toward her own agenda and her willingness to express her opinion and argue with others on a host of issues.

Nick's more circumscribed role is limited by his lack of personal experience with the field of ESL teaching (either by being a teacher or being a regular observer of ESL teaching), his exploratory phase of teaching as a career, and his avoidance of disagreeing with other group members or expressing his opinion on many of the topics that came up. However, with the rise of his participation in the brainstorming session, we can see how a shift in the types of knowledge utilized provided the context for Nick to participate much more actively. Nick and Sachi had comparable levels of participation in the collaborative dialogue. It is to a discussion of her participation in the meeting that we now turn.

Sachi

Sachi is a likely candidate for a limited role also. Not only does she speak English as a second language but she is also new to the study of teaching and has only one year of actual language teaching experience. Further, this process of collaborative education is literally "foreign" to her, a topic that I take up in Chapter 6.

Sachi's warrant for entering the conversation in the collaborative dialogue part of the fourth group meeting is based largely on her one agenda item: Deciding the class and student types before choosing the content for the presentation lesson. Six of her 11 turns are directly focused on this one idea. While the group does not decide on the class type in this meeting, it is clear she does have an agenda.

Like Nick, Sachi does not use warrants of course readings or personal experiences of teaching to enter the conversation. However, in other meetings she does use her role as a second language learner (although often solicited by another group member). As we have seen, the most common way for her to enter the conversation is when a group member structures a turn of talk for her. Like Nick, Sachi does not tend to join into ongoing disagreements or express her opinions on many of the issues that are being aired.

Sachi's total lack of participation in the Brainstorm highlights the role that the knowledge used and the interactional structure of a speech event can have on the

participation of international students. The shift in topic, structure of the discourse, and the emotional key (e.g., humor) of the Brainstorm effectively silenced Sachi. This event bears witness to McDermott's (1988) argument: Sachi's being left without a voice was a systematic outcome of "a set of relations among a group of people bound in a social structure" (p. 38).

In sum, the group members that play the most active roles in this meeting use a wide variety of warrants for entering the conversation. They are in the thick of the discussion drawing on personal experiences and arguing and giving their opinions on a variety of topics raised. They talk about the group readings and use the vocabulary of those authors. Nick and Sachi on the other hand do not use personal experience in this meeting or talk about readings. In short, their participation is limited to a much smaller set of vectors for entering the conversation.

Discussion

What does this research suggest about the nature of participation in collaborative peer learning in this setting? First, it is obvious that not all group members participate equally. Three group members dominated the collaborative dialogue.

Is the goal of collaborative peer groups equal participation of group members (as defined by equal turns and/or air time)? Or is the goal to create a social

structure that allows everyone a voice in the group even if there are unequal rates and types of participation. On both theoretical and empirical grounds, the answers are complex.

Participation in this group is a function of a host of interlocking factors: the type of speech event, including topic and discourse structure; personal biographies (and personalities), particularly with reference to experiences with teaching and learning a second language, teacher education course work, and commitment to teaching as a career; task type; collaborative norms operating in the course; co-construction of voices among group members; cross-cultural discourse patterns; and the fact that English is the language spoken. As I have argued, each of these factors in combination with the others influences the participation of group members.

In this brief discussion, I would like to highlight two critical components of the questions posed above. First, this Methods course was conceived with a diverse student body in mind: Experienced and inexperienced teachers, Americans and international students, students just entering an educational program and students just finishing, etc. With the complexities of voice discussed in this chapter, it seems unlikely that a self-selected group of students (like the Content group) would organize themselves so that all members have an equal number of turns of talk while working on a task. From my

experience, it just is not going to happen. Nor need it even be a desirable goal.

A more promising perspective is embedded in the second question's focus on all group members having a voice in the group task. As I suggested in the previous chapter, I believe that the group was largely successful in doing that despite the problems unearthed in the fourth group meeting. Many of those problems were worked out in the subsequent Process meeting. One way of respecting the diversity of the student body is to support multiple ways to participate and the Methods course in general does this well through a range of activities: Small group work, whole class discussions, dialogue journals, presentations, and final papers. Within the small groups, a diversity of participation styles must also be respected.

Nick, with his lack of teaching experience and course work and his interest in participating from the periphery, is not likely to be among the most active members of the group. However, this experience still afforded him opportunities to learn about a subject (perhaps not as much as he would have liked) and experience a novel approach to education. Further, he was a valuable member of the group--supportive, thoughtful, and willing to speak when he felt he had something to contribute--who participated in ways that made sense to him (and others).

Much the same could be said for Sachi who was clearly laboring under the stress of attempting to adjust to an

alien form of education organized through a second language. Under the circumstances, her lower level of talk is not surprising. Importantly, she had a voice over the course of the term in her group because of her own knowledge and skills she brought to the process and because the group valued her participation and struggled (sometimes unsuccessfully) to ensure that she had opportunities to speak and be heard.

One of the points that this research project has highlighted for me is the need to broaden our conception of participation to embrace the diversity of our students. The core of collaborative learning is the voices of all the group members. If educators are interested in using collaborative learning in their classrooms, they must create tasks and course norms to support students' voices in all their complexity. However, with the multiple barriers to voice that I have presented, it seems likely that in any group, student talk will be unevenly divided. The goal should not be to have everyone speaking the same amount but to ensure that each member has an opportunity for a voice within the group. The organization of the Methods course provides a rich site to explore how that can be achieved.

Issues for Research and Education

The framework for voice proposed in this chapter has implications for both researchers and educators. In

investigating voice, this framework provides researchers with a lens for viewing voice not as the sole property of an individual but rather as a social product of group interaction. As I have shown in my analysis of the Content group, the voice framework focuses attention on the tripartite co-construction of voice. In researching voice, it is necessary to understand the local economy of turn-taking, the discursive resources used by participants to construct talk that is both understandable and worthy of saying, and the ways that participants signal to one another that a speaker's talk is worthy of being heard.

One issue that has been finessed up to this point is precisely to whom voice belongs. Is it the property of an individual or actually a group construct, larger than any one individual? Generally, when we talk about the voice of a person or group we closely identify the individual (or group) with a specific voice. So that we can say that Clinton now has a voice in Washington or women had a strong voice in politics in 1992. In this report, I have frequently discussed Sachi's voice, Nick's voice, etc. So which is it? Do individuals have voices or is voice a social construct larger than any one individual?

Voice is a metaphor for the ability of a group member to gain the floor, have something to say, and have their talk attended to and valued by other group members. The heart of collaborative learning in this course is structuring opportunities for the combining of the

resources of each and every group member. In investigating voice, an important source of data are reports by individuals on whether they feel they had a voice in some setting. As we saw with Sachi, it was her comment about being dissatisfied with the group's response to her questions in the fourth group meeting that was the impetus for me to analyze her turns of talk in terms of the type of speech act she was using. It is hard to imagine researching issues of voice and ignoring the voices of individual participants' own experiences. Voice is located in the individual.

Social systems and individual members of those systems are mutually constitutive. A group is a collection of members and individual members of a group or community are fundamentally social. It is not possible to tease apart the individual from the social web in which an individual lives. As we have seen, in order for a Content group member to gain the floor, speak, and be heard requires multiple levels of social coordination. Voice is a social construct.

So, which is it? Is voice a social construct or does it belong to an individual? I believe that this question, stated as it is, dichotomizes individual and social, and this is not particularly helpful. People and groups (or communities) are mutually constitutive and there is no reason to choose between them. In researching voice, we must come to understand the articulation among the multiple

strands of social interaction which produce (or mute) the voices of group members. We must focus on both the individual's experience of voice and the multitude of socially coordinated actions which create the conditions for an individual's voice to be heard.

McDermott (1988), quoting Yeats's poem "Among School Children," asks, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" He adds:

> In the same vein, we should ask how anyone could possibly tell the inarticulate from the situations in which their inarticulateness is organized, or the articulate from the situations in which they are allowed to have their words emerge and listened to and even remembered. (p. 44)

In turn, how can we possibly hope to know the voice of Sachi or Adrea apart from the social contexts in which their voices are created? How can we know the dancer from the dance? I believe that we cannot. As researchers, we are forced to simultaneously consider the vast web of social interactions that make face-to-face communication possible and the experiences of individual group members supported by and entangled in that social web.

In the final section of this chapter, we revisit the critiques of the course raised at the end of Chapter 3 and view them through the lens of the voice framework.

"Hard Information," Lisa's Document, and Voice

In Chapter 3, I introduced a critique of the Methods course based upon the dissatisfaction of group members with what they had learned about their group topic of content-

based learning in the course of the semester. In addition, I raised (along with Sachi) the critique that the group spent too much time focusing on a rather abstract question--"What is content?"--rather than what we thought to be a more germane issue--How does one go about teaching content to second language speakers? I wonder: Are these problems endemic to collaborative work? What are teacher educators to make of this critique?

The experiences of the Content group provide a rich set of data for exploring these issues and questions. Further, the conception of voice developed in this research provides a frame for investigating them. Why were members of the group not satisfied with the knowledge produced by their research? I would like to explore this from four angles: (1) text analysis within the group; (2) voice of group members in relation to group status; (3) differential purposes of collaborative dialogue; (4) voice of the instructor.

Text Explication. In this section, I use the voice framework to analyze one particular aspect of critique of not learning enough about their group topic: Text explication. The question that I want to investigate is--Why was the group unable to come to a satisfactory analysis of the Mohan text and other written resources? I believe that this is the central idea of Nick's reference to lack of "hard information" in the course (although I will also discuss a different perspective on this). There are three

hypotheses that come to mind around this issue: (1) The group simply needed an experienced educator to scaffold their efforts to make sense of a relatively difficult text like Mohan. In other words, they needed to be taught by a qualified teacher because they were unable to teach themselves. (2) Within the group, there were individuals who had the analytic skills to explicate the Mohan text but they had no voice. (3) The task designed by the instructor scaffolded the group to enable them to create certain types of knowledge but not others.

Did the group require a teacher? A traditional role of teachers has included text explication. Rose (1990) argues that in helping neophytes engage in a new discourse (e.g., psychology or literary analysis), a crucial function of teaching is to help students make sense of this new language and the conceptual systems that it points to. An important part of that process is to provide background knowledge which is essential for understanding a field's text.

Did the Content group need a text-explicating teacher to help them with Mohan? I do not think so. While the group certainly could have benefitted from having the course instructor help them understand the Mohan text and her long experience in the field could have been an important resource for the group to draw directly upon, ultimately there were the resources within the group to learn from a course text. Further, from the instructor's

point of view, her presence would have undermined other goals that had a higher priority in this educational setting: Experiencing peer learning, providing a space for students to discuss an educational topic outside of the hearing of "experts," and creating a community of peer learners. From her point of view, text explication is not a high priority in this course unless it is the direction that the group itself decides to pursue (which has happened in the past with a Content group using the Mohan text).[13]

Lisa, on her own initiative, did a close reading of the Mohan text and presented that analysis in a one page handout to the group on October 24, one week before their presentation. The analysis provided a selection of key ideas from Mohan and in my judgement could have been a promising extension of understanding of this text. In other words, Lisa did the traditional work that a teacher might do in carefully reading a text, gleaning a set of key ideas, and transforming those ideas for the group into a clearly written document. The group did not require a teacher to do that work.

However, Lisa's document did not get incorporated into the discourse of the group. I can find no references to her work in any of the group meetings by other group

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13. I do not want to leave the impression that Jerri categorically rejects learning from texts or a teacher taking on a major role in text explication. She is rejecting these as having a high status in the Methods course but uses them in her other courses.

members. In other words, Lisa was not heard on this crucial issue.

The voice framework provides a warrant for investigating how written documents "gain the floor," an analysis of their content and function, and how written documents are heard within the group. In the case of Lisa, she handed out her written analysis at a regular Thursday evening group meeting, one week before the presentation. At that meeting a number of documents were handed out and discussed, including my own memo and a joint document written by Danielle and Adrea outlining the lesson plan for the presentation. Interestingly, Lisa's document was never included in the group discourse at this meeting or subsequent ones. Why not?

The factors that may have hindered her document from receiving the attention that it deserved revolve around the task and status of group members. First, the document was produced just one week before the presentation and clearly deadline pressure was a strong influence on the group. However, the group met a total of three times for over seven hours during that one week stretch after they received the document. If they had wanted to, the group could have discussed Lisa's document.

In the meeting that her document was passed out, Lisa herself steered the group away from discussing it as she suggested focusing on the memo that I had written. In this meeting, most of the discussion focused on specific issues

of the presentation with little focus on more abstract ideas of content-based learning dealt with in her own paper. However, in two subsequent meetings, the document was also never discussed and it would have been quite appropriate for parts of those discussions. The point that I want to raise focuses on the issue of status. If the instructor had come to the group with the identical text analysis of Mohan, she would have been heard. Her analysis would have become part of the group discourse. Part of the reason that Lisa's document was not heard was that she did not have the status within the group to ensure a thorough hearing. One way to think of this is in terms of speech acts. How would the group have interpreted the act of distributing a memo if it had come from Jerri? As Jerri has noted in a discussion of this issue, it would have likely been seen as a request by the instructor to read and discuss the ideas contained in it.

How was it seen by the group when it came from Lisa? The group did not do anything with it. It did not seem to be treated as a request. I link this directly with her status within the group. A key component of a teacher-led explication of text is found in the relationship between status and voice. A teacher's voice in text explication is linked to issues of status and authority: the status to get students to read one's work and the authority to have something worthy of saying about a text.

While status is one aspect of this issue, there is the question of why Lisa didn't "push" through her request for others to use her analysis. That is, why didn't she attempt to persuade the group to discuss her analysis of Mohan? She was clearly capable of doing this as I demonstrated in the third group meeting. However, I have no data that answers this question directly. I do know that there was a strong feeling of dislike among group members for the Mohan text. I also know that the group had no mechanism for introducing and discussing written documents in the group meetings. While it is not clear why Lisa's voice was not heard in this matter, it is clear that the group had the resources within it to engage Mohan. Hence, in terms of sheer ability within the group, a teacher was not required. Exactly why Lisa's document was not heard remains an open question.

Differential Purposes of Task. The dissatisfaction that Nick (and others) raised is related, in part, to two conflicting views of the group task. The task from the instructor's point of view is designed to provide an authentic teaching task, an introduction to various teaching methods but not a thorough grounding in them, an authentic experience in collaborative learning, etc. Text was not a high priority for her. If it had been, she would have designed the task to ensure that process was highlighted and supported. In addition, Jerri writes,

> ... it's not only that explication is not a high priority, it's that I am attempting to undermine the

> authority of the text and my own voice, while still attempting for us both to have a voice.

Why undermine the voices of authority? Again Jerri writes,

> Teachers need to be in control--think through and apply to their situation--not follow authoritative texts. I purposely set it up so they can reject the authority if they so choose.

On the other hand, students see the task in a different light. They choose their group because they are interested in a particular topic. And they naturally expect that they will come out of the course with a good bit of knowledge about it. Further, they expect that this knowledge will come in significant ways from experts--authors and the instructor.

When Nick talks about his desire for more "hard information," I think he is referring to authoritative knowledge. His use of the modifier "hard" suggests a desire for knowledge that is stable, weighty, and unassailable, in a word--authoritative.

In sum, the task has two different interpretations. The instructor's idea is to focus the group's attention on the internal resources of the group and to empower them to reject traditional authorities. However, students expect to come away from this course with "hard information" from experts about how to teach a second language and that expectation is not necessarily changed simply through the act of putting them in groups and giving them tasks.

I do not wish to reduce Nick and his ideas on this matter to that of a child longing for an adult to guide

him. He seems well aware of the tensions that are at work in this issue as can be seen in his course evaluation quoted in Chapter 3. However, he was simply not persuaded by this course that what he gained from the Content group was in fact superior to what he would have gotten from a more traditional course with a much higher profile teacher. Just as I am not persuaded by my work with the Content group that they could not have benefitted from guidance toward issues of <u>how</u> to teach content (rather than what content is).

It to the issue of consequences of muting the teacher's voice that we now turn.

<u>Jerri's Muted Voice</u>. Jerri's voice has been deliberately muted within the groups and I would like to briefly touch upon a couple of issues that this raises. The different interpretations of the group task that I posited above are related to Jerri's muted voice. Because her voice is absent from much of the class discussion, she has less opportunity to <u>persuade</u> group members about her own ideas.

This raises an interesting dilemma of which she is well aware. By setting up the course to allow students to communally construct their own methods of teaching away from the voices of experts, she also undermines her own ability to convince them of her own ideas and approaches. I take this issue up in Chapter 7 and explore how Jerri's voice is both muted and amplified in the course.

Facilitator's Voice. One may wonder where I was at in all of this. My enactment of the role of facilitator also included a deliberate muting of my own voice in order to allow other group members opportunities to speak and take ownership of their group. Although I believe that I had the knowledge and teaching skills to lead an analytic discussion of the Mohan text, my role in the group was circumscribed by the local norms for facilitation. Again, the role of status in voice is crucial.

However, I do fault myself on two counts. First, I could have helped Lisa get her document heard within the group. That type of action fits in well with the role of facilitator. My focus was primarily on issues of dialogue and it should have extended to issues of written texts as well. Second, I was well aware that the group needed guidance toward focusing on actual issues of teaching content. In retrospect, I could have "named" that issue for the group in such a way that I feel confident they would have heard me.[14] I could have helped them frame the issues involved in teaching content (e.g., meaning negotiation, text explication, student activities and tasks) and still ensured that ownership of the task would be firmly in their hands.

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14. I would like to thank Lisa Sparrow (personal communication) who introduced me to the distinction between a facilitator "naming" an issue and "filling a gap." The former refers to the act of identifying an issue or problem for a group and then letting them deal with it. The latter suggests a facilitator actually attempting to solve the problem for the group.

Dissatisfaction. Jerri does not necessarily view the group's dissatisfaction with their level of knowledge about their topic as a problem or as a failure of their group process. Further, she believes that they did learn a great deal about teaching content. As she says, "Think about the scope of the activity they put together--can you imagine beginners even imagining they could pull off something like that?" Again, the group's dissatisfaction results, at least in part, from their own expectations about schooling.

The work of Mary Jeannot (1992) frames this type of dissatisfaction in terms of resistance to "invention." That is, the group's longing for "hard information" comes from a desire for authority, stability and unchanging knowledge (cf. Beyer, 1988). The Methods course challenges teachers to invent new conceptions for the roles of teacher and student, authoritative knowledge, and the practices of schooling. It is not surprising that many of us involved in this process reach out for more traditional and solid footing.

Educational Implications

I would like to briefly touch upon a set of suggestions to address some of the issues raised in this section.

1. It may be possible in the task description to better define what Jerri is attempting to organize, particularly in relation to voices of authority and the

opportunity for groups to create their own methods drawing upon varied authorities but beholding to none.

2. The choice of text books for the groups must balance between being a rich resource that groups can profitably draw upon and being accessible for the group members within the task structure. Jerri is well aware of this balance and looks for new texts each year. She is currently looking for a new text on content-based learning.

3. It may be possible to amplify Jerri's voice in the groups without undermining her other goals. For example, she could write a memo to the Content group encouraging them to explore issues of how to actually teach content rather than focusing on more abstract ideas. Further, the type of texts provided for the groups could also be used to guide groups in this direction. However, clearly, there is a tension between mutually incompatible goals which cannot be easily resolved. And yet, this is precisely the kind of issue that will arise in teacher's own classes when they use collaborative groups and seeing the instructor grapple with this issue could also be instructive.

4. Facilitators could be alerted to their responsibility to "name" issues that come up in their groups without feeling that they have to devise a plan or solve the group's problem. They also need to understand that groups may struggle with productively using their group text(s) and that the creation of a collaborative

dialogue in which everyone has a voice includes members' written documents.

Conclusion

The conception of voice argued for in these last two chapters has a host of implications for educators. It provides a practical orientation to the classroom conditions which are necessary for members to participate. Whether the class is organized around collaborative learning or teacher-led discussion, the voice framework provides a set of working assumptions on the nature of participation.

Turn-Taking

In order for a student to participate in a discussion, that student must gain the floor. There are multiple ways for turn-taking to be organized. Teachers may call on students, have students bid for turns, allow choral responses, etc. The voice framework directs attention toward this initial step in communication.

In the Methods course international students are often left out of whole group discussions because they find it difficult to gain the floor. Asian students tell me that they are not experienced with the turn-taking systems used in classrooms in the United States and often find that long before they are prepared to bid for the floor (e.g., raise their hands) their American peers have already gained the

floor and begun to talk. The voice framework both identifies this initial step in the process as a possible barrier to voice and presents a system (i.e., Sacks et al., 1974) for understanding it. It is crucial that educators understand that turns are socially coordinated and the role that structuring turns for students (by fellow students as well as the teacher) plays in this process.

Speaking

If we want students to join into substantive discussion in our classes, we must provide a context in which they will want to speak and have something of value to say. The voice framework suggests a number of factors that are integral to that process. Crucially, we must consider the types of topics, warrants and knowledge that are privileged within the class discourse. Further, the social identities of students are also crucial here. If students do not feel they have anything to say or do not have a right to speak, then they probably will not do so.

The voice framework explores some of the complexities of this aspect of communication and guides educators to consider carefully both the communicative resources that students bring to class discussion and also the constraints imposed by particular classroom speech events.

Hearing

A crucial component of voice in educational settings, and one often overlooked by educators, is the profoundly social and interactive nature of voice. In order for students to feel that their participation is valued, it is essential that students feel heard when they do talk. While the act of hearing can be verbal or non-verbal, the key is for the class to be oriented toward valuing the ideas and opinions of peers (even if they ultimately disagree with them). Students must feel that it is part of the classroom culture to learn from one another. As we have seen with the Methods course, the structuring of the group task, the collaborative norms introduced by the instructor, the role of the facilitators all provided scaffolding for the voices of group members. The voice framework provides a way to conceptualize the role of hearing in voice and to track it through discourse.

In conclusion, this chapter has had the dual purpose of exploring the discourse of the Content group in order to gain insights into collaborative learning and exploring the voice framework. Using the conception of voice as argued for in Chapter 4 and applying it to the specific case of a meeting of the Content group has provided an opportunity to understand how voice is co-constructed in this setting and some ways that an individual's voice can be amplified or muted.

Finally, we explored a set of educational issues in the Methods course that arose as a result of participants' critiques of the course. Again, the voice framework was used to examine these issues and generate suggestions for future Methods classes. From here we move on to Chapter 6 and a discussion of collaboration as a culturally organized form of talk with a particular focus on the experiences of Sachi and other international students in the Methods course.

CHAPTER 6

COLLABORATION AS A CULTURAL FORM OF TALK

> Since human action involves free invention ... and human knowledge is reflexive, practice can be turned against what constrains it; so structure can deliberately, be the object of practice. But practice cannot escape structure, cannot float free from its circumstances.... It is always obliged to reckon with the constraints that are the precipate of history.
>
> Connell (1987, cited in Davies, 1989, p. 13)

Introduction

Talk is simultaneously creative, novel, and unpredictable; it is also constrained by the fact that it is built upon the "precipate of history." Forms of communication are rooted in cultural practices and yet are created anew through face-to-face interaction. In this chapter, I argue that while the Content group's collaborative dialogue was powerfully influenced by American communication patterns, the group's desire to create a truly collaborative form of talk forced them to "invent" a local form of communication. In this process, the presence of Sachi was central for the creation of this cross-cultural form of talk. In the last section of the chapter, I track her experiences with collaboration and locate a set of tensions that this form of communication can pose for international students.

Collusion in Communication

Communication requires a high degree of coordination among participants. McDermott and Tylbor (1986) stress the importance of "collusion" in social interaction:

> We start with the assumptions that are, by now, well informed: participation in any social scene, especially a conversation, requires some minimal consensus on what is getting done in the scene; from the least significant (strangers passing) to the culturally most well formulated scenes (a wedding or a lecture), such a consensus represents an achievement, a cumulative product of the instructions people in the scene make available to each other; and because no consensus ever unfolds simply by predetermined means, because social scenes are always precarious, always dependent on ongoing instructions, the achievement of a consensus requires collusion. (p. 123)

Because language is virtually infinite in its possible meanings and yet we are able to use it to coordinate (at times) rather precise social actions, it is necessary for conversationalists to "enter a state of collusion as to the nature of the world they are talking about, acting on, and helping to create" (McDermott & Tylbor, 1986, p. 125). This view highlights the importance of people working together to create an ongoing definition of interaction (e.g., brainstorm) in which much of the world (and the participants' knowledge of it) is communally held in abeyance and only particular slivers of reality are voiced and acted on. This view also highlights the contingent, creative, and unpredictable nature of social interaction.

It is important that educators understand the nature of the "collusion" that particular educational speech events require for participants. Research in educational sites has

established the negative impact that differences in communication norms between teacher and students can have on students' academic success (Chick, 1990; Heath, 1983; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Philips, 1983). This research highlights the importance of teachers being aware of the possible cross-cultural communication problems which arise in multicultural classrooms. It also suggests that it is important that teachers adapt their teaching practices to be culturally responsive to the pedagogical needs of their students (cf. Au, 1980). One of the goals of this research has been to establish the structure and function of collaborative dialogue (see Chapters 3 and 5). In this chapter, I explore the cultural roots of collaboration and tensions evident in negotiating the collusion necessary to sustain collaboration in a multicultural group.

I am assuming that the form of talk I have called "collaborative dialogue" has a world view embedded in its structure and that as participants create this form of talk, they orient toward this view of the world. In short, collaboration requires a collusion among its members concerning issues of communication, personhood, knowledge, and society.

One aspect of this collusion found in collaborative dialogue in the Methods course is the concept that what the group members are doing is actually "schooling." While for many students, small group work is a familiar form of education, for others it is novel and suspect. For example,

many international students (and American as well) are initially nonplussed to discover that much of the teaching in the Methods course will not be led by the instructor but by students. This violates their own expectations about the roles of teacher and student, the function of lessons in classrooms, and the process of learning. In order to better understand the cultural assumptions that undergird collaborative dialogue in the Methods course, we now turn to an analysis of its cultural foundations.[1]

American Cultural Influences on Collaborative Dialogue

The research on the Content group has provided a window into the collusion that allowed group members to maintain their group effort and successfully carry out their task. I have identified the forms of knowledge--personal, expert, and communal--which group members utilized in the group. Further, I have documented the range of roles that students took on in the class and within their own group. For example, students were positioned in roles of group member, graduate student, dialogue journal partner, teacher, etc. Within the Content group, Danielle was the "task master," Lisa was an idea generator and structurer of turns for Sachi, the role of secretary revolved among members, etc.

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1. I do not focus on the pedagogical assumptions on which this form of schooling rests, as that topic was discussed in Chapter 2. Rather, my focus is on the broad cultural foundations of collaborative dialogue.

Fundamental to this form of education is a belief that students can benefit from the multiple perspectives inherent in these varied roles. The forms of knowledge utilized in this setting and the roles students take on are foundational to the collusion that McDermott and Tylbor (1986) identified as essential to social interaction.

Collaborative Dialogue: Norms and Ideology

In order to probe further into the ideological collusion found in collaborative dialogue, I have found it useful to draw upon the work of Carbaugh (1989) who provides a conceptual system for identifying specific features of communicative performance across cultures. He focuses on the local terms that cultural groups use to identify various ways of talking (e.g., "sharing" and "being honest" in American culture [Carbaugh, 1989], "griping" in Israeli discourse [Katriel, 1990], "chanting" in Kuna discourse [Sherzer, 1983]).

Carbaugh (1989) asks the questions "What verbal actions are identified in these cultural terms?" and "What does the act of identification indicate?" (p. 102). His conceptual system is useful in helping to identify some of the salient characteristics of the local form of collaborative dialogue.

Carbaugh contrasts forms of talk that focus on individual "acts" of performance with "events" that involve "coenactments of communication."[2] An event requires

> a cocreation among multiple persons without which the event would lose force and integrity as a culturally identifiable form. (pp. 98-99)

Collaboration is very much oriented toward the "event" end of the spectrum. Unless group members are all participating in the event, the term collaboration is not appropriate. Hence, we have a norm for active participation and its interactional enactment in the multiple structuring of turns for one another that we saw in the fourth group meeting of the Content group. In one of the small groups, an international student was not a full participant and as a result one group member reported to me that her group was not truly collaborative. In other words, unless every member of a group is a full participant, the small group work loses its "force and integrity as a culturally identifiable form" of collaboration. The norm of "active participation" for all members is integral to this form of talk.

An additional component of talk identified by Carbaugh (1989) is its "functional" aspect, that is "what the events accomplish for participants" (p. 101). Carbaugh suggests

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2. Carbaugh (1989) creates four levels of use that characterize terms of talk: acts, events, styles, and functions. I have chosen to focus only on events and functions in this discussion of collaboration, as these two levels provide the most insight into the issues of collaboration explored in this chapter.

that certain events have a "metacommunicative function" in which the event is a model for social interaction. I would argue that collaborative dialogue functions in the Methods course as both the primary organizational structure of the course and as a model or ideal form of educational discourse. My claim is not that collaboration is set up as the only model for instructional discourse, but rather, in this course, it is oriented toward as a model form of communication for fulfilling a particular set of pedagogical goals (e.g., creating a community of learners, connecting learner's knowledge with course concepts, and empowering students). However, in this site, this model is also problematized, as it is an object of critical reflection, questioning, and dialogue.

Messages on Communication

Carbaugh (1989) also introduces a set of concepts for identifying three types of salient messages that are embedded in cultural forms of talk: messages on communication, sociality, and personhood. The first category, messages about communication, has as one component a mode of directness/indirectness. Collaborative dialogue is decidedly oriented toward the "direct" end of the spectrum. However, it was also a contested element within the course.

Several of the Content group members--Lisa, Danielle, and Adrea--felt comfortable arguing their ideas and

positions openly. As we have seen, Sachi and Nick were more guarded in their willingness to express their own personal opinions. However for all members of the group, their willingness to express their own individual perspectives was limited by the need for group solidarity. While collaborative dialogue within the course was oriented toward a direct style of communication, in its enactment in the Content group, it was constrained by the imperative to not disrupt group cohesion.

A second message about communication identified by Carbaugh (1989) is the "relative degree of structuring of the code" (p. 105). One of the salient aspects of collaborative dialogue is the lack of a highly structured code which could be a barrier for members to enter the conversation. In other words, collaborative dialogue uses everyday English so that everyone will have an opportunity to participate. This lack of code is evident in the vocabulary used in which technical vocabulary from within the field is largely restricted to vocabulary drawn from communal readings and course experiences. It can also be found in the interest of course participants in promoting in the Process meeting a "natural" form of group talk without artificial structures being applied to the group talk. That is, collaborative dialogue should not create a code that prescribes who should speak or when.

An additional message about communication that is salient for this form of talk is raised by the question "Is

this culturally identified act, event or style of speech a more or less substantial form of action?" (Carbaugh, 1989, p. 107). Katriel and Philipsen (1981) have identified "chitchat" as a insubstantial form of talk in America whereas "communication" is considered substantial. In the design of the Methods course, collaborative dialogue was a highly privileged form of talk as evidenced by the amount of resources devoted to its maintenance; The assignment of a facilitator for each group, the Process meeting in the Content group, and the many journal entries devoted to the topic of collaboration. These are clear indicators of its status and importance in this community. However, the status of collaborative dialogue in the small groups was not accepted by all members as substantial. For some students, coming to see the small group talk as valuable was an evolutionary process. That is, it was something that they learned during the course of the semester. In fact, much of the course can be viewed as a process of orienting students toward viewing collaborative dialogue among peers as a substantial educational activity.

In sum, collaborative dialogue is structured to encourage a direct form of communication in which students share their own experiences, opinions, and understandings. The form of talk is not highly structured in terms of vocabulary or discourse structure as it is meant to be accessible for all participants. Finally, as a model form

of educational talk, it is clearly regarded as a substantial form of communication.

Messages about Sociality

"As persons use cultural terms for talk, they may also be talking indirectly about their society, their relations among each other, and the institutions in which they find themselves and through which they speak" (Carbaugh, 1989, p. 108). Carbaugh suggests that such messages can point to talk that is oriented toward solidarity/closeness or power/distance:

> North Americans discuss and praise "communication" (Katriel & Philipsen, 1981), "being honest," and "sharing" (Carbaugh, 1988), they endorse those institutions that support such enactments. Families, self-help groups, and family-type businesses are valued because they express a caring institutional life. (p. 109)

What is collaboration pointing to in terms of sociality? One set of social relations clearly marked in collaboration is solidarity versus power relations. Collaboration with its explicit equal status membership and the deliberate absence of a higher status instructor is clearly oriented toward solidarity among group members. The definition of collaboration used in the course which emphasizes group action (as opposed to individual work outside the group) and consensual decision making are both manifestations of this orientation toward solidarity. As this research has established, these elements are also evident in the actual enactment of the course.

Further, the orientation toward cooperation among group members, pooling of individual resources, and the explicit lack of imposition of authority (i.e., "experts") is a marked contrast to the more traditional organization of educational institutions with their more competitive and individualist orientations. Part of the message about sociality encompassed in this form of talk is directed toward institutions and proclaims that schools can be organized around solidarity rather than power (Kreisberg, 1992; Bloome & Willett, 1991).

The instructor, Jerri Willett, and her colleague, Mary Jeannot, have suggested that a dominant form of talk among facilitators in the Methods class is one of a "language of care" toward the group members that they work with. This language of care is characterized by an orientation toward "comfort, healing, and solidarity" (Willett & Jeannot, 1993, p. 14). Their analysis could be expanded to encompass important aspects of the relations and language used by small group members with one another. Collaboration does indeed suggest a set of messages about social relations. First, that equal status peers can profitably work and learn together absent a guiding authority figure. Second, that group members can relate to one another through a discourse of care (Noddings, 1991). Finally, that educational institutions can be organized around solidarity relationships rather than coercion.

Messages about Personhood

Embedded in forms of talk are categories of personhood and these vary across cultures (Geertz, 1976). The well known orientation of American culture toward "individualism" (Hsu, 1969) can be contrasted to a view of personhood among the Ilongot (Philippines). As Carbaugh (1989) writes,

> To be an Ilongot person is to speak less as an individual who makes private information public by negotiating with independent others, and more as an appendage within a socially organic membrane. (p. 110)[3]

What is the message about personhood found in collaborative dialogue? At first glance, this form of talk would seem to be challenging the Western orientation toward the individual and orienting more toward a communal conception of people situated in a "social organic membrane." The ideology of the class is explicity multiculturalism.

However, I want to argue that collaboration in the Methods course is still fundamentally based upon the concept of the individual as a "bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe" (Geertz, 1976, p. 225). One way that this is manifest is in the view of members sharing their "resources" with one another. The premise of this form of talk is that unique individuals with their own histories, knowledge and skills, and personalities are entering into a social contract to (temporarily) share

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3. Carbaugh is drawing upon the ethnographic work of Rosaldo (1990).

their resources in order to complete a specific task. The social unit ceases to function in the ways described in this research upon completion of the task.[4]

Rather than challenging a cultural premise of personhood, this form of talk maintains the individual orientation found in the United States and puts it to work to produce a positive group outcome. As we have seen, the way to achieve a good presentation is for the group to utilize all the resources of each unique individual in the group.

Sharing and Collaboration

If my premise is correct that this form of talk is consistent with American cultural patterns of communication, then it would seem likely that this form of institutionally organized talk would resonate with other forms of talk in American culture. Carbaugh (personal communication) suggests that collaboration looks very much like another American form of talk, "sharing."

Carbaugh (1988), in his discourse study of the Donahue show, identifies three aspects of "sharing" in American discourse:

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4. The contractual nature of this collaboration is emphasized by the abandonment of academic work immediately following the group presentation. Once the task is complete, groups typically find themselves unable to organize themselves to communally continue the collaborative dialogue despite their expressed desire to continue. However, many group members maintain their social bonds for years after the class.

> (1) a person who was making resources of self available to others, (2) speaking as an act of expressiveness, generally expressing feelings and experiences, and (3) support of one another by orienting to common purposes. (p. 144)

The first identifier of sharing is the act of "making resources of self available to others." In collaboration, the identical idea of "sharing resources" is identified. This is also consistent with the concept of personhood as a unique individual unit as suggested above. The second identifier of sharing is focused on the act of speaking honestly based upon one's feelings and experiences. While a vocabulary of emotions was not an integral part of the discourse of collaboration, personal experiences were a prominent warrant for talking. Note also how both forms of speech are organized so that all conversationalists could enter the dialogue as everyone has experiences (or emotions).

Finally, sharing is meant to be supportive of other group members through an orientation toward a common purpose (e.g., creating social cohesion to explore a common problem such as the death of a loved one). Collaboration also has this unity of purpose, although the focus is more task oriented related to the purpose of the Methods course.

Another interesting parallel between these two forms of talk is the imperative to share one's resources.

> If one chooses not to share, one has chosen not to cooperate in a common way of creating and valuing relationship. The withholding of one's personal resources is devalued since an inexpressive self saps the common verbal good of invaluable and common

> commodities--the unique resources of self and its cooperative participation in a relationship. (p. 146)

In both forms of speech, the process demands that information held within the individual be communicated with other members.

For example, I argued for a Process meeting after the fourth group meeting with Content group members by noting that the group <u>needed</u> the experiences and input of Sachi as she was the only member in our group from another culture and had learned English as a second language. In other words, I argued for the Process meeting based upon a group need to have access to Sachi's personal resources. This argument was well received by fellow group members. We can now better understand the underpinnings for the collaborative norm of active participation; to not actively participate is to deprive the group of one's invaluable resources and hence, to jeopardize the common task.

However, collaborative dialogue in the Content group was not identical to sharing. While sharing only requires participants to talk openly about their own lives (and others to listen sympathetically), collaboration required that the group negotiate a common frame for viewing their topic and create a viable lesson plan. The struggle that the Content group engaged in to reach common understandings and make decisions played a central role in their collaborative dialogue. Further, group members were much more comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions on issues of second language teaching and learning than talking

directly about how the group was functioning. Hence, the need for the Process meeting to provide a forum for the group members to share their own perspectives on the group dialogue.

Conclusion

In sum, the Content group created a form of dialogue which oriented toward norms of active participation of equal status members and the sharing of unique resources of the self. As we saw in the analysis of the group discourse in Chapters 3 and 5, these norms were enacted through the social interactions of group members as they structured turns for one another, negotiated the meaning of terms, "heard" one another, etc. Further, group members viewed one another, in part, as essential sources of knowledge without which they could not successfully complete their task. This pooling of resources was integral to the local definition of collaboration created by the Content group. In fact, collaborative dialogue was only collaborative dialogue when everyone in the group participated by sharing resources.

The sharing of personal resources was realized through a direct style of communication which used a non-restrictive language code that was available to all group members. The organization of the discourse around an accessible language code, group solidarity, and the resources of the individuals in the group provided the basis for collaboration. Within

the course as a whole, collaboration was set up as a model form of instructional discourse.

However, as we have seen in the Content group, collaborative dialogue was an evolving form of talk. The roles of group members and the structure of the group discourse were contested and negotiated. It is important we come to understand how a form of talk is both constrained by historical conditions and yet, unpredictable and subject to invention.

I have advanced an argument that collaborative dialogue is, in large part, a culturally organized form of talk. If this premise is accurate, then this has clear implications for group members who come to class with fundamentally different views on the function and structure of communication in education. I believe that Sachi's experiences within her group both support my premise and provide a lens for understanding the tensions created for an international student as she attempted to participate in collaborative dialogue. However, Sachi's presence in the group also provided the impetus for the group to create a novel form of communication. It is to this evolutionary aspect of the group discourse that we now turn.

The Evolution of Collaborative Dialogue

The argument that has been advanced up to this point is that collaborative dialogue in this class was a form of talk which was consistent with American cultural patterns of

discourse. However, a central feature of the Content group's meetings was its evolutionary nature. The instructor has argued that collaboration as it was configured in this course was not typical for either American or international students. From her point of view, collaborative dialogue is not a form of talk that virtually any student (or teacher) has had much experience with in schools. My research supports her assertion that collaboration is a novel form of education for virtually all students in the class.

The collaboration enacted in the Content group was, in part, "invented" (see Jeannot, 1992) by the group members. In the process of creating this form of dialogue, the participants in the course (i.e., instructor, facilitators, students), largely American, drew upon the cultural resources (i.e., shared symbols and meanings) at hand to fashion this form of talk. However, the diversity of group members created the conditions for an evolving form of talk.

One impetus for the discourse to evolve was the presence of international students within the groups. Their presence necessitated the creation of a form of collaboration which was co-constructed from disparate worlds, negotiated, and some of its cultural roots laid bare. As we saw in Chapter 3, as the Content group members wrestled with issues of voice and participation, the group discourse changed. Hence, the assembled members of the group with varying experiences and stances toward

collaborative group work, were able to collude with one another to create their own local form of collaborative dialogue.

This collusion was an evolutionary process as the group struggled to create an acceptable form of collaboration for their particular group members. An important component of this process for the Content group was the Process meeting. It provided a space for group members to negotiate their own local form of collaboration and importantly, re-affirm their own communal commitment to collaboration.

The Process meeting provided an opportunity for group members to reflect upon and negotiate the nature of participation within their group. The discussions around the use of culturally embedded topics, turn-taking, "pushing" one's ideas, and participation had a direct impact upon the subsequent discourse of the group. This meeting bears out the importance of structuring time for group members to reflect upon and negotiate how they want to work together.

Further, the heterogeneous nature of the groups in the Methods course, particularly the multicultural backgrounds of group members, created the need for the explicit identification of discourse norms and the negotiation of how the groups were going to work together. While in a more homogeneous group, much of the collusion needed for group members to work smoothly together may remain tacit, in a cross-cultural setting, it is more likely that the norms of

the group dialogue will need to be made explicit.[5] This may be difficult for group members who come from more homogeneous cultures that value tacit, communal knowledge.

As we have seen with the Content group, their desire to create a truly collaborative group process necessitated not only the explicit negotiation of group norms in the Process meeting but also reflection and dialogue by group members about their own roles within the group. As we shall see below, Sachi continued for much of the term to struggle to find her place within the collaborative dialogue of her group. Ultimately, the group members were successful in creating a form of talk that allowed her to have a voice in the group. The point that I am making here is simply that collaborative dialogue in the Content group must be viewed not as a stable, wholely American form of talk but rather as an evolving and dynamic form of cross-cultural communication.

Further, the evolving form of talk that I documented in Chapter 3 is the result of accommodation by all the Content group members. The American students had to struggle with colluding in a form of talk in which cultural knowledge was not equally distributed, not all group members would "push" their ideas through, and the very definition of participation was being negotiated. In sum, collaborative

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5. Judy Solsken (personal communication) has noted that the need for this type of negotiation may be present within any group due to differing discourse norms represented across gender, class, and ethnic groups.

dialogue was a dynamic and evolving form of talk which grew out of the negotiations and accommodations among the group members.

Collaboration and International Students

One of the components of the Methods course that I have found most interesting is the role of international students in the class, particularly in the small collaborative groups. By breaking the class down into smaller groups, I reasoned, international students would have many more opportunities to actively participate in the course. I knew that in many classes international student rarely said anything in large group discussions. If using English was a limitation, then the small groups would provide international students with a less formal, more relaxed setting to ask questions and negotiate a common understanding of the topic at hand. Again, the small groups would be beneficial.

My experience with this class over the course of four years suggests that small group work is a bit more complex than I had originally imagined. Many international students do find the small group collaboration functioning as I suggested above. In ways that would not be possible within a whole group structure, the small groups allow many international students to actively participate in the course. They routinely play central roles in their groups

and leave the group experience pleased with this form of education.[6]

On the other hand, the collaborative small groups can also be a difficult site for some international students to work in (cf. Watanabe, 1990). Collaboration is itself a specialized form of educational activity with its own history, rationale, and cultural organization. It requires that students take on a novel student role, that of group member, and engage in collaborative discourse with classmates to research their group topic and plan a presentation (in English!).

This form of education is based upon a set of pedagogical principles that are largely foreign to these students. Collaboration in the Methods course is consistent with American discourse patterns as it was designed by an American instructor, the class is made up of largely American students, all the facilitators are American, and the class is in an American institution of education. The strangeness of the course structure (What, the teacher doesn't teach?), its complexity, and the multiple roles that students are expected to play (What, I teach?) create their own problems for students as do the uncertainties built into the group task. The final <u>product</u> of their collaboration--their group presentation--is left entirely open ended (What, no "right" answer!) and the procedures for researching and

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6. For an analysis of one of the small groups in which international students played a central role, see Bailey (in press).

planning their topic are also left entirely to the judgement of the group.

The presence of international students in the class made the small group dialogue a cross-cultural event. Within the Content group, Sachi's presence made that group dialogue a form of cross-cultural discourse. This required that group members attend to differing conceptions of collaboration. Further, negotiation and the need to be explicit about roles and norms became important. The group's struggle to co-construct a mutually satisfying collusion about proper roles, goals, and means for collaboration reveal some of the tensions that this form of education raises.

Sachi: Valued Resource and Alien

Sachi's role in the Content group provides insights into the experience of collaboration from the point of view of a group member that is from a culture other than the United States--Japan. As such, she is able to lead us to several important points of tension which she reports between herself and the social interactions which made up collaborative dialogue. Because the focus of this chapter is on the cultural basis of collaboration, Sachi's struggles to participate in the group, her various critiques of the course, and the negotiations which surrounded her participation are relevant.

However, this is not to suggest that Sachi's experiences are typical for international students or that ultimately Sachi was dissatisfied with her experiences with the course. To the contrary, she reports that she learned much about group learning and new approaches to language teaching and the course was influential in her own teaching of Japanese. My point in focusing on her experiences is that this section provides a voice for Sachi's valuable critique and affords me an opportunity to view collaboration through a cultural lens that is not my own.

One of the foundational norms of collaboration is active participation by group members. Active participation includes taking one's share of turns of talk, giving opinions, following the group discussion, as well as sharing resources of self. However, as I have already established in Chapter 5, Sachi's participation was less than other group members. Her participation in meetings in terms of turns of talk (or total air time) was typically the least of any group member. In addition, many of her turns of talk were not initiated by her but solicited by another group member.

If we look at the participation of Sachi in the first speech event of meeting four, we see that six of her ten turns were the result of a structuring of a turn by one of the group members either negotiating the meaning of a statement or directly soliciting her opinion. The remaining four turns were self-selected. As we have seen, some of

these turn allocations by others were in the form of responses to Sachi as she went about making a point. However, others were unsolicited.

Excerpt 1

255 **Lisa:** Did you want to say something? Were you you
256 looked like you were trying to say something.=
257 **Sachi:** =No ha=
258 **Lisa:** =You're not. Okay.

Are these patterns of solicitation similar for other group members? The answer is no and Sachi was very aware of this difference. In an interview, she noted that even though Nick did not talk much either, group members were not repeatedly asking him questions to get him involved in the talk. She also made it clear that she did not like being solicited for turns of talk.

In thinking about being solicited by other group members, Sachi drew a distinction between a group member being "sensitive" and being "aware." She explained that being "sensitive" is when a group member feels the need to take care of ESL students. She reported that this had the effect of positioning her in the role of a child, and the other group member as a parent. On the other hand, being "aware" of another student's needs is based upon equality between the two. She cited meaning negotiation as an example of a member being "aware" of her needs. In talking with Sachi, it was clear that she was aware of the benign intent of peers' "sensitivity" and yet she firmly rejected the one-down position it placed her in.

Why was Sachi's participation so sought after in this group? I believe that three reasons are likely. First, with collaboration defined as the sharing of resources, Sachi's cultural background of being Japanese and her experiences in learning English as a second language gave her a special status within the group. Sachi had something that the group needed that no one else could provide. Second, group members report that they grew to respect the ideas and opinions of Sachi through the course of the term. She impressed group members as a person with something to contribute to the group. Finally, participation of all group members was a vital part of the local definition of collaboration. Without Sachi's participation, the group would not be collaborative.

A couple of ideas emerge from this. First, the norms for active participation provide a rationale for the multiple solicitations of Sachi. Second, the "language of care" that Willett and Jeannot (1993) identified as a dominant discourse within the course may have had the effect of positioning Sachi from her point of view in a parent/child relationship with other group members. It may be difficult for group members to distinguish between actions which fellow group members will find helpful and collegial and those that position a group member in an

inferior position, particularly among a multicultural group.[7]

The norm of active participation is problematic. What it means to participate in a group or class differs across classrooms, institutions, and cultural settings. The norm of active participation in the Content group conflicted with Sachi's own sense of her proper role within a group. The tension here is in the fact that Sachi both understood the norm for active participation and resisted it. Her own discussion of this issue in the Process meeting focused upon the differences between the American discourse norm for talk and her own Japanese pattern.

Excerpt 2

511 **Sachi:** ... like this culture like if you don't speak
512 they consider you a ha dumb ....
515 but we [Japanese] we really think um we think and think
516 and think and then a talk just a little bit its very
517 different.

Three elements of her "cultural explication" are relevant for the present discussion (Willett, in press). First, Sachi identifies a discourse norm for American culture (i.e., active participation) by linking it to the

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7. This was also an issue in other small groups. Here is a journal entry of an American member of the Problem Posing group:

> Your comment about how to get Xiaoli and Li Hwa to participate ("just ask them") seems so simple and obvious, but it's not. To me, asking someone their opinion (feelings, etc.) can be putting them on the spot--which can make a lot of people uncomfortable. Also I feel that I'm taking on a "teacher's role" when I ask a peer what they think.

negative social identity assigned to a person who violates the norm. Second, she contrasts the American cultural norm with the Japanese norm of talking "just a little bit" and identifies silence with "thinking." In the vocabulary of the present discussion, Sachi is arguing against the (American) norm of active participation and for a view of group work that would privilege thinking and its discursive realization in silence. Third, Jerri has noted the irony of Sachi having to talk in order to make silence acceptable in this setting. We can see from the Process meeting the need for members to be more explicit about their assumptions when engaged in a cross-cultural event like collaboration. Further, for members of some cultural groups, the very act of being explicit about norms of social interaction may be problematic.

Clearly Sachi wrestled with her own level of participation as the following journal entry for the fifth group meeting (immediately after the Process meeting) suggests:

> Once started to talk, I could not stop ... generally speaking I felt bad about myself going from one extreme (being so "quiet") to the other (being "annoying").

While her fellow group members did not feel that she was being "annoying," she obviously felt conflicted about her own participation in the group.

Sachi's experience provides us with insight into a problematic issue in collaboration. Fundamental to collaboration is the need for all group members to

participate, otherwise it is not truly collaboration at all. However, what constitutes active participation is problematic and under negotiation. Sachi's experience suggests that this norm can result in a student being both welcomed into the group discussion and, at times, positioned as a child in need of care. The subtle issues of the maintenance of face among group members are highlighted in this discussion.

Two ideas emerge from this aspect of Sachi's experiences. First, a norm for active participation can impinge upon the negative face of group members. In other words, collaboration as it is organized in this setting can be difficult for group members like Sachi who view participation in different terms. It may be important for group members to respect group members' right to hold their counsel and participate on their own terms.[8]

Second, collaboration in this setting privileges social relations which are supportive and caring among all course participants. Although this is one of the course's strengths, as Sachi has shown us, it can, at times, present an additional tension. It would appear that the line

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8. Hymes (1980) makes a similar point when discussing Herbermas's criteria for an ideal form of discourse:

> Habermas presumably is concerned simply that no structure prevent a member of a group from having a right to participate in decision. But if one considers the possibility as well of an obligation to contribute what one knows and wants, the lack of right to remain silent or refuse commitment to a consensus--real enough issues--one has raised again the matter of constraint. (p. 49)

between infantalizing "sensitivity" and empowering "awareness" can be difficult for group members to locate, particularly in a cross-cultural setting.

A central component of collaboration in the Methods course is the idea of group members sharing resources (i.e., personal experiences and knowledge) with each other. The experience of Sachi illustrates the tensions that this norm can foster. In the Process meeting and a subsequent interview Sachi resisted being positioned as a "resource" within the group on two accounts.

First, she saw the course norm of seeing one another as a "resource" as a double edged sword for her as it not only opened up the real possibility for each person to be valued within the group but it also <u>restricted</u> her role as she felt that she had to "speak through that point of view" (i.e., as an international student). Here is Sachi in the second meeting of the term entering a conversation in her role as "ESL student":

<u>Excerpt 3</u>

Lisa: I would just like to ask could you say something? because obviously you've been in this situation [of learning English as a second language].
Sachi: Yes but can only from adult points of view
Lisa: Go ahead

She felt at times that her role as "resource" in terms of her cross-cultural perspective as both a representative of Japanese culture and an ESL student was too confining. In other words, she felt that she was capable of speaking from a broader perspective than merely these two categories.

She was also a teacher of Japanese, a long-time resident of the United States, a participant in the Methods course, a reader of course texts, etc. She suggested that in future courses there needed to be a more thorough explanation of the term "resource" so that international students would not be viewed exclusively from the "narrow role" of an ESL student.

The second reason that she resisted the notion of being a "resource" was the burden of responsibility that she felt in being the sole representative of Japanese culture. My own experience with living overseas suggests that this may just be part of the reality of a foreigner living overseas. However, the point that Sachi was making was that she found being a resource for the group put her in an uncomfortable position of being the sole "Japanese person" and "ESL student" in the group.[9]

After reading an earlier draft of this chapter, Sachi emphasized to me that she truly understood <u>both</u> sides of being a resource and appreciated the positive aspects of

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9. Sachi cited as an example of the pressure that she felt as a representative of Japan a remark in the final class of the term by Nick on the prevalence of silence in Japanese meetings. His comment was based upon the following remark by Sachi during the Process meeting:

518 **Lisa:** What happens in Japanese meetings?=
519 **Sachi:** =quiet ha
520 (Group laughs)

Sachi noted after the class that she meant her comment to be taken as a joke.

students seeing one another as resources. She also stood by her earlier comments on this topic.

International Students as "Guinea Pigs"

Sachi reported that she had mixed feelings about the treatment of "ESL students" in the course in general and felt that they were "kind of guinea pigs." She noted that other students, at times, "treated us like their students" rather than "colleagues." One part of her feeling of being a "guinea pig" was related to my own research project and the tape recording of the group meetings.[10] In her final journal entry she discussed this point and noted that our morning meeting prior to the Process meeting helped to assuage her concerns on that issue.

It is not precisely clear in what ways she felt like international students were "guinea pigs" for American students. However, I believe that the experiential nature of the course is a likely source of her observation. A premise of the collaborative group work and the course as a whole was that the experience of working in a Whole Language class with a multicultural student body could help students learn about the dynamics of learning (and teaching) in a multicultural classroom. We used the international students

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10. Students, both American and international, were not familiar with the research being an integral part of classroom life. This course was for many students the first encounter with the concept of "teacher-as-researcher" (Johnson, 1992).

as "guinea pigs" in the sense that they were part of the authentic experience of creating a Whole Language multicultural classroom. I know that I approached the course with this mindset. Part of my fascination with the small group work was its potential for confronting American students with the complexities of creating local discursive practices that would facilitate the communication and learning of their second language group members.

In terms of the presentations, I felt that having the groups teach to a multicultural class allowed the small groups to confront many of the issues which they would face in teaching an ESL class (e.g., teaching non-native speakers, cultural norms of turn-taking, public speaking). I now wonder if there is not some kind of disequilibrium between the roles of international students and American students in this process.

It is not that international students cannot benefit from experiencing small group work for themselves or from the task of teaching their classmates. Rather, within this process, they were positioned in many ways as surrogate second language students. Hence, Sachi's comment that some students treated international students as "their students." In fact, international students were routinely referred to within the class as "second language speakers" or "ESL students," tying their social identity to their linguistic characteristics and language learning status.

In ways that American students were not, international students were part of the course curriculum. I can certainly understand how Sachi might feel that they were "guinea pigs." One theme that is beginning to emerge is the way that the course, and the collaborative aspects of the course, emphasized international students' "otherness." International students had a peculiar status within the course based upon their characteristics as aliens (e.g., second language speakers, non-American cultural identities, ESL students).

Collaboration Based upon Differences

In the meeting before the Process meeting, Sachi had told me that she did not want to be looked at as a stranger or outsider in the Content group. She felt that there was too much focus in the class on what was different about individual students. She emphasized the importance of seeing what students had in common. In a subsequent interview, Sachi connected this sense of being a stranger in the group with being a resource for fellow group members. That is, her sense of being a stranger was connected with the emphasis on her unique personal resources of being Japanese and a speaker of English as a second language. Her critique of the, at times, constraining nature of having to speak through the warrant of personal experiences as a second language speaker are once again raised.

We can see from Sachi's account that collaborative dialogue in the Content group was a challenge for her to engage in. Coming from a Japanese culture that values homogeneity (Lebra, 1976) over individuality, the organization of the small group work around differences among group members was problematic for her. She felt that being positioned as "different" also positioned her as an alien within the group. However, for the American members (including myself), being positioned as different and <u>valued for that difference</u> was unproblematic. This clash of differing cultural assumptions is one of the tensions that this research has uncovered.

The process of international students being positioned as "Other" needs to be viewed as a co-construction in which international students play a part in that process. As Jerri has noted, international students position themselves as "second language speakers"--they apologize for the way they speak English, ask for feedback on their English, and ask for special treatment based upon their status as second language speakers. Sachi herself referred to international students as "ESL students" in an interview.

Educators need to understand how the social identities of their international students are co-constructed within a class. These issues also highlight the importance of international students having an opportunity to discuss their concerns of being "aliens" and "guinea pigs" with their classmates.

Sachi's Evolving Role

Sachi's own role in the group continued to evolve during the term. By the end of the planning sessions for the presentation, Sachi was speaking about issues that were unrelated to her role as an international student (e.g., her suggestions for the presentation in the October 21 meeting). Further, she also began to take a more active role in managing the group conversation by asking for clarification when she did not understand and raising objections to ideas she had questions about.

Early on in the group meetings Sachi may have felt constrained by a narrow conception of personal resources. As the term continued however, she seemed to break out of that mold. While she never participated to the degree that some of the other group members did, it is clear that the group had created a form of talk in which Sachi had a strong voice. The experiences of this group (and others) suggest that this was not an inevitable result of the group interaction. Rather, it was a struggle and required negotiation and accommodations by all group members.

Viewing Sachi's role within the group has helped us to better understand collaboration and the tensions it can foster for students who are outside its cultural norms and/or resist its ideology. I would like to briefly discuss ways that Sachi was positioned as an alien within her group.

Within the Content group, Sachi was treated differently from other group members not because they did not value her

participation but precisely because they did. Because she was seen within the group as a valued resource, she was also positioned in a variety of ways as an "alien," a valued alien perhaps, but an alien nevertheless. And she was well aware of her alien status. Further, as a result of the facts that the course was focused on second language teaching, the course's international students all spoke English as a second language, and the course was organized around an experiential learning, international students were positioned by American students, at times, as ESL students within the course, rather than colleagues. Sachi felt that positioning.

It is clear that Sachi was keenly aware of her alien status in this course, in ways that perhaps she would not have been in a more traditional class. She felt this alienness because collaboration was organized around an ideology of warranting personal experience and knowledge and a requirement of sharing of these personal resources. This was framed in a communicative event that required the full participation of all group members in order to achieve this form of talk.

The nature of participation in a social scene is complex. As we have seen with Sachi, the norm for active participation within her group created problems for her. She found it difficult to both be an active group member and participate in the group dialogue at a level that she felt comfortable with. Sachi's experiences suggest that

educators need to respect not only each member's right to a full voice in the class but also to respect varying conceptions of participation. I return to this topic in Chapter 7.

One of the ironies of this research is that I have continued the tradition of positioning Sachi as an "alien" in order to better understand the cultural basis of collaboration. In this research, as in the course, her status as the "Other" makes her valuable.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to understand collaboration as a culturally organized form of talk by analyzing it through two distinct lenses. I began this chapter with an analysis of collaboration based upon a conceptual system for describing (and comparing) terms of talk used across cultures (Carbaugh, 1989). This was obviously a rather abstract approach to analyzing collaboration, although it was tied closely to my research data. In the second half of this chapter, I have viewed collaboration through the eyes of Sachi. Her views of collaborative learning are grounded in her own experiences with the Methods course, and her critiques have the insights of an insider. I would like to briefly attempt to synthesize these two perspectives.

Discussion of Collusion in Collaborative Dialogue

The types of collusion that are necessary for students to enter into in order to successfully collaborate can now be identified, reflected upon, and made candidates for maintaining or altering aspects of the Methods course. One type of collusion evident in collaboration is related to roles or social identities that group members play. Collaboration asks students to play the role of an active member of the group. One's status is connected to the abilities of group members to share their personal experiences and knowledge with their group mates. Failure to play this role made members fear that they would be classified, in the words of Sachi, "a dumb," or Nick, "bored" or "not listening."

The focus of this research has been on the types of collusion found in the discourse of the Content group. One aspect of this was the myriad ways in which it was structured to enable group members to have a voice. Its unrestricted code, forms of privileged knowledge, norms of participation, hearing of other group members, etc., were all designed to create and sustain the voices of group members. However, Sachi's experiences suggest that the whole question of what it means to participate and how one participates is problematic, particularly in a multicultural setting in which members come to the group with disparate views on communication, schooling, and student roles.

Collaborative Tensions

I believe that the issues that Sachi has raised can help us to better understand some of the dilemmas that this form of education raises. I do not believe that these issues are tangential or that the course needs only a little fine tuning in order to eliminate them. Rather, they are true problematics, as the issues that they raise are in fact inherent in collaboration in multicultrual groups.

I would like to summarize the tensions that I believe are present in the course in relation to international students. I do not claim that this list is comprehensive; it is simply a working list based upon the present investigation. Further, creating this list of tensions does not imply that a particular component of the course that is the source of the tension needs to be modified or eliminated; nor does it suggest that this tension dominates the class and totally disrupts all other parts of the course. Many tensions are dealt with nicely within the present course structure and with the considerable skills the course participants bring to the class.

My purpose in identifying these tensions is fourfold: (1) to aid in understanding students' experiences with the course; (2) to suggest that they be included within the course as issues for students to reflect on as they work collaboratively; (3) to inform the course instructor as a basis for planning future classes; (4) to help other

educators in understanding and implementing their own collaborative courses.

Educational Questions Raised by Course Tensions. The following is a set of questions that capture the educational dilemmas that have been identified in the tensions surrounding collaboration in the Methods course:

1. How is possible to create a collaborative educational structure to promote participation of all students while avoiding the creation of a form of education that is so foreign to some students that it becomes a barrier to participation?

2. How can students be positioned as "resources" within the course without positioning international students in the constrained roles of ESL students or stereotypic members of another culture?

3. How can students be "resources" within the course without positioning them as aliens?

4. How can we create a norm of active participation in small group work and respect differing conceptions of participation?

5. How can we set up an experiential-based class on multicultural teaching issues and not single out international students as "guinea pigs"?

6. How can we promote an ethic and language of care within the course and not position international students as children in need of care?

CHAPTER 7

COLLABORATION AND VOICE IN THE METHODS COURSE

Collaborative Educational Research

All too often educational research in schools has no effect on issues that are of concern to the teachers and students in the classroom being researched. Rather, the research results are written up for members of the researcher's own academic tribe. Researchers have different interests and concerns from practicing teachers and the language used among academics is often not the language of teachers. Hence, research is often of little interest to teachers and much of it is inaccessible as well.

This research project has brought home to me the importance of collaboration between teacher and researcher. The dialogue between the two is a crucial aspect of the research process and has certainly added to this research project immensely. The researcher views the classroom with a different set of eyes and has the time and interest to collect and analyze data. The teacher enriches that analysis through a unique knowledge of the students, the history of the course, and the local institution.

My taking on the role of facilitator in this setting provided me with a legitimate role within the class and it involved me in its life world in a way that a more detached researcher role would never have allowed. I understood

something of the Content groups's anxiety as the presentation came ever closer because I felt that tension myself. Taking on the participant observation role was fundamental to this research project.

As an educational researcher, my role as facilitator also had the effect of making me a part of the course process. I was part of the dialogue that excluded Sachi in the Brainstorm in that eventful and much-analyzed fourth group meeting. When I brought the transcripts of that meeting into the Process meeting, I was not in the position of someone accusing others of making mistakes. Rather, I was a part of the problem. Likewise, when I raised the issues of critique of the course, I was in a position to ask what I could have done as facilitator to address some of the issues. Critique is a very different act when the object of the critique has been partially created by the person doing the critiquing (or giving voice to critiques raised by others).

My involvement with this course actually stretches back five years. I have played many different roles in the course over that time: assistant to Jerri for two years, member of a group of facilitators, facilitator of two small groups, and researcher. The cycles of participation, observation, reflection dialogue, theorizing, and action has been fascinating, instructive, and satisfying. This "action research" cycle is a powerful way to learn about educational practices.

I have seen the concept of voice develop during this time both as a theoretical framework for researching discourse and as a local concept used within the course for viewing collaboration and participation. Last year, Jerri and I used my analysis of collaboration and voice within the course. Students read a paper on this topic which used transcripts drawn from this research to illustrate ideas of collaborative dialogue and voice. We were able to introduce the collaborative norms that we hoped the group would orient toward with concrete examples drawn from the previous year. We were pleased with the results.

Jerri has instituted research as an important part of the Methods course and has drawn in many doctoral and master's students to do research in the course. The result has been an evolution of ideas, language, and practices. We are developing our own discourse about collaborative, task-based learning. As this research accumulates, course participants--students and facilitators--have access to a rich array of documents that can help to orient them toward the course structure, rationale, history, and goals. The local discourse that is evolving provides a vocabulary through which course participants can view and discuss the course. This process is ongoing.

Development of Local Theory and Generalized Theory

I believe that educational researchers must attempt to collaborate with practicing teachers in order to both

improve instructional practices and enrich the research process. A close collaboration between researcher and practicing teacher can be mutually beneficial. However, the relationship must be built upon an acknowledgement of interdependent but distinct goals for the research.

The primary goal of educational classroom research is for a researcher and practitioner to gain an understanding of a local educational setting. The focus of that research must be mutually chosen, so that the teacher has some real interest in the research questions. The research questions should arise from issues that are integral to the class or school under investigation. Crucial to the process of research are cycles of dialogue in which the teacher helps the researcher understand the local scene (e.g., biographies of students, history of the course over years of teaching, and institutional constraints). The researcher provides data and analysis of classroom events to the teacher. Through this dialogue a common vocabulary evolves which draws upon the discourses of research, educational theory, and the local language of the school and class.

The goal of this kind of research is twofold. First, the development of "local theory" which can provide insights into the classroom (or school) in which the research was conducted (Elden & Levin, 1991). The goal of local theory is to aid the classroom teacher in her/his attempts to improve the instructional practices of that particular class. The shared language, experiences, and mutuality of

interests and goals of the researcher and teacher are crucial components of this research if it is to be successful.

For the researcher, the development of local theory may not be the primary interest. The researcher will want to develop a more "generalized theory" (Elden & Levin, 1991) that is written in a language that may be far removed from the language and concerns of the classroom teacher and addresses the particular concerns of theorists and researchers. While the language of the two types of theory need not be mutually exclusive, to the extent that they are oriented toward different audiences with differing histories and interests, they will be distinct.

In the following section, I explore the insights I have gained into the nature of collaborative learning as it was enacted in the Methods course in the fall of 1991. These ideas are a part of the local theory of teacher education that is being developed within the Methods course.

Creation of a Collaborative Classroom

In this section, I explore a set of ideas drawn from this research project concerning the creation of a collaborative classroom. The ideas discussed in this section are designed to contribute to a local theory of collaborative, task-based education, applicable to the Methods course and similar courses.

Collaborative Norms

The creation of collaborative norms to orient student interaction is a crucial step in setting up a successful collaborative classroom. However, it is important that this not be seen as a simple process or one that a teacher can impose. Rather, the creation of class norms is communal, negotiated, and ongoing.

When teachers use their institutional authority to ask students to collaborate, we cannot expect that they will automatically have a common understanding of what that term means and what they are to do. Rather, assigning groups to work collaboratively creates a rather generalized goal, with the actual enactment left up to the group members to figure out on their own. Collaboration is not a typical instructional discourse used in schools. Hence, students will have to "invent" a local form of collaboration that is functional for the group in which they find themselves. The form of collaboration found in the Content group was largely drawn from American discourse patterns (e.g., "sharing") and shaped for the local needs of the group. However, this local form of talk was also shaped by the presence of Sachi, a Japanese woman, and by the need to include her in the group.

The process of constructing a novel form of talk, particularly in cross-cultural settings, requires a certain amount of groping, struggling, and negotiating. As we saw in the Process meeting, group members approached

collaboration from varied perspectives; that meeting provided an opportunity for the group to align themselves around a negotiated, local definition of collaboration. The point that I want to emphasize is that asking students to collaborate simply creates a kind of working semiotic space which they fill in and define through their subsequent actions and talk. This act of defining is contingent and neverending.

With the Content group, issues of participation, group focus, and decision making kept welling up. Further, the presence of Sachi resulted in the group having to be more explicit about issues of participation than they might otherwise have been. The group struggled, successfully for the most part, to create a collaborative group process, but the work never really ended during the two months that they prepared for their presentation. The evolution of the collaborative dialogue was ongoing.

As we saw in the Methods course, the course instructor introduced the essential features of collaboration on the first night of class. One of the key ideas introduced, and supported subsequently in a multitude of ways, was the positioning of students as resources for one another. This idea has great power, as it reverses a common set of assumptions about education.

First, this perspective positions students as valued and capable members of the class. A pervasive stance in education is a model in which all students are viewed almost

exclusively as deficits (cf. McDermott & Hood, 1982). For example, bilingual students in public schools are categorized in terms of having "limited English proficiency" rather than stressing their bilingual abilities. One pedagogical assumption integral to this course is that teachers need to build upon what students know and can do, rather than exhaustively assessing what they do not know and cannot do. Students are not walking deficits!

In most educational settings, heterogeneity is taboo. One of the central organizing principles of schools is that it is necessary to create "homogeneous" groups of students through a process of testing and sorting. However, by positioning students as resources for one another, the heterogeneity of a class, generally regarded as a major impediment to education, becomes a positive attribute. Further, a class built upon an ideology that views learning as a communal reconstruction of disparate knowledge rather than the imposition of one form of knowledge in place of another makes heterogeneity a positive force. Hence, the concept of students as resources is foundational to this course. However, it is not without its own set of problematics and tensions, which I will return to below.

A second norm introduced by the instructor, which is crucial for collaborative learning, is the importance of multiple, legitimate <u>social roles</u> for all students in the course. As we have seen, students take on multiple roles: group member, journal partner, teacher, student, writer,

etc. Clearly, these multiple roles are consistent with the norms of students as resources. They allow students to play various roles and learn from the perspectives each provides. Further, this also allows students with different interests and skills to have an opportunity to find roles that allow them to fully participate. The taking on of multiple roles was integral to the enactment of this experiential teacher education course. It demonstrated to teachers how it is possible for them to create a course in which their own students take on multiple roles and responsibilities.

Structure of the Task

The structure of the small group task has emerged from this research as a very powerful organizational force. While the instructor is absent from the small group dialogues, her voice powerfully resounds through the structure of the group task. One obvious way that the task informs the small group interactions is the instructor's insistence on a collaborative process.

A critical feature of the task in the Methods course is its "uncertainty" dimensions.[11] The task in the Methods class is open-ended in terms of the "answer" that the group creates (e.g., information on group topic for their presentation) and the "procedures" that they use to get their answer (e.g., the process of researching the topic).

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11. A term used by Elizabeth Cohen at the 1993 AERA Conference.

Ultimately, what students produce in terms of their own research is left entirely up to them. Lisa noted this norm when she told Sachi, "We don't have to do anything."

The task sets up a kind of problem: Research topic X. However, there is no one "right" answer to this problem. Integral to the task is the group's construction of their own answer, just as teachers working on a curriculum committee must construct their own answers from multiple possibilities. Likewise, there are no specified procedures for researching the group topic, other than the collaborative norms discussed above. As a consequence, students are forced to rely heavily upon each other, and a significant amount of group time is devoted to resolving these issues (e.g., What to focus on? How to proceed? How to make decisions?). Many of the struggles that the Content group went through are a direct result of the organization of the task.

This type of task challenges students to create a set of procedures which will produce a rich understanding of the group topic and an informative class presentation. The ambiguity of the task allows students to complete the task as they see fit and, hence, fosters investment in both the group work and the final presentation. A task in which a right answer is posited or a set of procedures for arriving at an answer is specified by the instructor would involve much less ambiguity. However, I wonder if there would not

also be less investment in and responsibility toward the task (cf. Cohen, 1986).

An important characteristic of the task in Methods is its authenticity. The authenticity of the task is twofold. First, the groups are organized around the research of a topic that they have an immediate interest in. By allowing students to have a choice in the topics that they research, the course builds upon students' interests. In addition, the group needs to develop an understanding of their topic in order to be prepared to teach their classmates.

A second aspect of the authenticity of the task is the teaching task. It is authentic in the sense that the group topic is integral to the knowledge base being created in the course. The student presentations are the only encounter the class will have with that particular topic in the course. I believe that the Methods course would be very different if group presentations were not an integral and vital part of the classroom process. If, for example, students could have derived the information covered in the group presentations from another source, such as the teacher, the dynamics set up by the task would have been altered. The presentations would be "practice" rather than authentic teaching. In addition, the presentation is a public performance in front of peers and teacher and, hence, groups very much want to succeed and put on an effective performance.

Privileged Knowledge

Education is in the knowledge business. It is the commodity that we consume, produce, and make available to others. The stance that a teacher education course takes on knowledge is naturally an important part of the course structure. The instructor organized the course around students' own knowledge, both personal and communal. The instructor created a classroom which established personal knowledge and the communal knowledge constructed among students as legitimate. However, as we saw with Nick's critique, this attitude toward students' knowledge was contested.

Fundamental to collaborative learning is a view that the knowledge constructed within the groups is legitimate. The course instructor constructed this norm in a variety of ways--stating it orally and in the syllabus, selecting readings that supported it, structuring a task which was premised on it, and modeling her own respect of students' knowledge through her written feedback to the class.

Three types of knowledge are drawn on in this course: (1) individual, (2) expert, and (3) communal. Positioning students as resources for one another taps into students' personal knowledge. Texts provided by the instructor give students access to expert knowledge. Communal knowledge is created within the small groups, group presentations, and whole group dialogues.

Once again, this view of knowledge is not without its own tensions. For many students, this classroom structure provides an opportunity to participate fully in the class. However, for others, the construction of communal knowledge by students is not fully satisfying; some miss the authoritative voice of the instructor and many miss the comfort of a more familiar class structure.

The instructor's conception of learning is deeply connected to this tripartite view of knowledge. Her design of the course is the embodiment of this perspective. It orients students toward a view of themselves as professionals with their own legitimate knowledge base and communal abilities to construct new understandings. However, it is important to acknowledge that this course does not represent Jerri's final and univocal expression of knowledge and its creation. Rather, it is merely one of a series of courses that students will encounter within her program. Other courses organize learning around different forms of knowledge and knowledge creation (Jerri's classes are famous for their heavy reading loads). While the Methods class is its most extreme example, all her courses use collaborative dialogue as an important part of the learning process.

Supports for Collaboration

The establishment of collaborative norms and the creation of collaboration is an ongoing process throughout a

term. The history of this course shows a steady evolution of supports being introduced into the course to aid students' collaborative learning efforts: a vocabulary of collaboration, facilitators, dialogue journals, and the instructor's feedback to student presentations. Over the course of many years, participants (i.e., instructor, facilitator, students, and researchers) have developed a language for talking about the course. Key terms are "collaboration," "students as resources," "scaffolding," "voice," "facilitator," and "Process meeting." These terms provide a way for members of the class to talk about the class processes and provide a discourse through which collaboration can be constructed. This vocabulary is continuing to evolve (see "language of care," Willett & Jeannot, 1993).

The use of written feedback by Jerri to the class is intended to satisfy students' desire to hear more from the instructor. Providing detailed comments on each student presentation has proved to be a good way to create a forum for Jerri's voice without directly intruding into either the small groups or the whole class presentations. It is a support for collaboration in the sense that it complements students' own efforts in the groups by connecting student presentations to one another and to the course as a whole.

Another support built into the course is the use of facilitators. Facilitators provide support for their small groups by observing the group process and "naming"

problematic issues as they arise (e.g., group conflicts, decision making problems, muting of the voice of a group member). In times of conflict and high stress, a facilitator can play a supportive role by organizing a forum for a group to identify and negotiate problems.

The precise role that facilitators play varies among facilitators, but all are oriented toward supporting their group to successfully complete their tasks collaboratively. As we saw in the Process meeting, this role can play an important part in the group process. The dialogue journals that facilitators write with group members are a wonderful way to discuss issues of group process and course issues. Student frustrations can be vented and discussed. It was a very valuable and enjoyable part of my experience as facilitator.

The Process of Collaboration

A major focus of this research has been on the process among members of the Content group as they engaged in collaborative dialogue and the host of activities that were a part of researching their topic and planning their presentation. This research shows a host of communal norms that the Content group oriented toward in their group meetings (see Chapter 3). These included active participation of members, members seeing one another as resources, and consensual decision making. In this section,

I discuss the following educational issues related to the process of collaboration as it was enacted in this setting:

1. The creation and uses through group dialogue of a semiotic space.
2. Group interdependence.
3. Barriers to participation
4. The role of the Process meeting
5. The role of praxis in learning.

Creating a Semiotic Space

An important function of the collaborative group work was for students to create their own understandings of a particular topic of second language teaching and learning. The small groups provided a semiotic space for creating new knowledge through dialogue. There is plentiful evidence that the students in the group were oriented toward this meaning making dimension of their group work.

In fact, one of the most impressive aspects of this course was the devotion of its members to the collaborative process in general and to this meaning making component in particular. For example, the Content group worked very hard to make sense of their own topic, not only through reading and discussing course texts but also by doing library research and attending conferences to get additional ideas. Within the group, they devoted much of their time to intense discussions of their topic. An important way that group members went about this meaning making was through the negotiation of meaning of key concepts from the course,

texts, or issues raised in the group dialogue. The willingness to clarify the meaning of another's talk is at the heart of collaboration. Meaning negotiation arises in social contexts in which meaning making is an integral part of the definition of the ongoing speech event. When conversationalists are seen negotiating meaning, it is likely that communal understandings are being privileged in that site.

Group Solidarity

The interdependence of group members was manifested in a multitude of ways. First, the group members worked hard to maintain harmonious relations among group members. Collaboration, as it was designed in this course, can be a stressful process and there were certainly stresses and strains evident in the Content group; but the group members were able to work through those difficulties without any serious breaches in relations. Second, the group oriented toward a consensual model of decision making. While making decisions was difficult for the group, they were committed to making decisions communally. Third, the group was committed to the collaborative process, as evidenced by their willingess to structure turns for one another, listen to one another, build upon each other's ideas, etc. In short, they co-constructed voices for one another. Fourth, the group was successful in producing a truly collaborative final presentation. This group solidarity was not

accidental. The group did not just happen to get along. They struggled to make this work and it was their willingness to do so that ultimately allowed the group to be successful.[12]

The Process Meeting

The Process meeting was an important part of the Content group process. It was premised on the idea that it was essential that all members of the group be able to participate and that if the group truly valued a member's participation they would find a way to communicate with one another. The Process meeting created another type of semiotic space, this time for the negotiation of a common understanding of how, as a group, we wanted to construct the group discourse (and through this discourse, our roles). The meeting I had with Sachi concerning the transcripts of the fourth group meeting helped both of us understand what issues she found problematic. The actual Process meeting allowed us to identify problems and talk them through and allowed Sachi and Nick an opportunity to negotiate a different norm for participation within the group.

The literature on cooperative learning suggests that this type of meeting can play an important role in group work (Cohen, 1986; Johnson & Johnson, 1990). The use of the transcripts of the fourth group meeting was a powerful way

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12. The factors that structured their "willingness" to struggle can be found in both their personal goals (see Chapter 3) and the structure of the course that nurtured it.

for the group to view their own discourse and come to a new understanding of group dialogue (Willett & Jeannot, 1993).

Participation

The norm for the active participation of group members is a central feature of collaboration. It lies at the heart of the collaborative group work and is central to the whole structure of the course. In order for this course to be successful, students must be actively involved in all phases of it.

However, this research suggests that the concept of active participation needs to be examined in light of the experiences of Nick and Sachi. Participation in a classroom setting varies across cultures. In Japan, attendance in a university class may fulfill a student's participation obligations. In the Methods course, obviously, much more is required.

Legitimate Peripheral Participants. The experiences of Sachi and Nick in their group suggest the importance of acknowledging a type of participation in the group (or whole class) which is outside the norm of active participation. In the Process meeting, they both argued for a nuanced understanding of participation which would allow them to play less central roles in the group dialogue. I would like

to call this role "legitimate peripheral participant," adapting a phrase from Lave and Wenger (1991).[13]

Their participation was peripheral in the sense that they were not at the center of the group talk but on the margins. They talked less than others and tended to ask questions more often than they provided answers. Their participation was legitimate in that this lesser level of participation was accepted by other group members. In a community in which participation is a central norm, it is important to acknowledge the legitimacy of a de-centered or peripheral (but engaged) role in the social action of the group.

The role that Sachi played in the group suggests that the whole notion of what it means to participate is a cultural construct; in a cross-cultural setting it is important that the concept be fluid and negotiable. For Sachi, silence could be equated to thinking and, hence, participating.

In a heterogeneous group, it need not be the goal that everyone speak an equal amount. Rather, the goal could be that all group members have access to the dialogue and are valued and respected when they do talk. That is, all group members should have a voice.

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13. Lave & Wenger (1991) introduced the term "legitimate peripheral participation" in a monograph on situated learning in which they state that "learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community" (p. 29).

When we are organizing collaborative learning with group members from disparate cultures, we must be flexible in the roles we ask them to take on, as they enter the group with their own personal biographies, goals, and interests. It is important that we design tasks that consider international students' backgrounds and role expectations. Positioning students as resources provided a way into the group dialogue for international students. However, once again this concept created its own problematic, which can be seen in Sachi's comment that at times she felt constrained to enter the group dialogue through that narrow window of second language learner or Japanese person.

Clearly, there is a real tension here. Collaboration requires the participation of all its members. However, the nature of that participation needs to be negotiable. One place for this to happen is in a Process meeting. One word of caution: It is important to not assume that a student who is quiet simply wants it that way. As we have seen with Sachi in the Brainstorm, her silence was interactionally accomplished. I believe that the concept of voice is a useful concept in this context. Our goal should be for each group member to have a voice in their group.

Barriers to Participation. I have chronicled a number of barriers to participation. I argued in Chapter 6 that collaborative dialogue is based largely upon American cultural organization of talk, with its own particular underpinnings of knowledge, social identity, and

communication. One clear potential barrier to participation in small or large group work is the type of knowledge required to participate in a task. While this may seem a rather obvious point, the experience of the Content group suggests otherwise.

When they planned their presentation, they chose a task--the creation of a lesson plan for a high school social studies class around the topic of Halloween--which privileged the knowledge which international students would in all likelihood not have. They chose this topic, while at the same time committing themselves to the participation of international students. They did not connect student participation to the knowledge required to do the task. One barrier to participation of students in a class is the type of knowledge used as a warrant to enter the dialogue.

A second dimension to participation is social identity. As we have seen with Sachi, collaboration in this setting was organized around a particular form of social identity, an identity she was not comfortable with. The norm of active participation can itself become a barrier. Educators must walk a tightrope in setting these communal norms. We have to create the conditions in which students will understand that they have a right to speak in a classroom setting without imposing an onerous responsibility to speak.

One of the integral features of this form of education is the multiple roles that students are asked to assume. However, this research suggests that asking students to take

on roles that are not traditionally part of being a student can become a barrier to their ability to participate in their groups. Or perhaps a better way to view this is that the roles required by collaborative dialogue may be resisted by some students.

Sachi was clearly not comfortable with the role of "active participant," as it violated her own sense of cultural identity. She used the Process meeting to negotiate a different type of social identity in the group which would allow her to participate in the group in ways that made sense to her. She also used the meeting to attempt to negotiate a discourse style that would not position her as a "child." In addition, she also managed to construct an identity (with the concurrence of the group) that enabled her to enter the conversation with warrants that extended beyond her identity of being Japanese and a second language speaker.

The Role of Praxis in Learning

One of the surprises of this research for me was how important the act of planning the presentation was for enriching the Content group members' understanding of their topic. Going into the Content group, I had assumed (along with the instructor) that a reasonable process sequence would be for them to first come to an understanding of the group's topic and then to plan the presentation. The group clearly did not follow this process. This research clearly

shows how the process of planning a presentation aided the group's understanding of their topic.

The cyclical process of tacking back and forth between dialogue focused on personal experience, course readings, and planning the group task was a powerful way for the group to use a form of praxis in their learning. The combination of theory, reflection and dialogue, and action (i.e., making decisions about the lesson) created a rich group process and many opportunities for group members to deeply engage their topic.

Voice in Education

The concept of voice can be useful both for helping students understand participation in collaborative and dialogic forms of instruction and for aiding educators in conceptualizing classroom discourse. The concept of voice, both as a goal for group interaction and as a sense making device for understanding the collaborative process, gives students an accessible term for discussing some of the central norms of collaboration. It allows the instructor to discuss ways in which dialogue can be structured to provide opportunities for students to talk and the value of students talking together and hearing each others' ideas.

Voice as a Communal Product. The concept of voice provides a term for talking about the interactional accomplishment of voice, so that students can be oriented toward a communal view of participation. As we saw in the

Process meeting, there is a tension between the responsibilities of an individual to "push" his/her ideas through to ensure that they get heard and a group nurturing each person's participation. A vital concept to introduce is the idea that a student's voice is a communal product and cannot be reduced solely to the skills or knowledge of an individual. This is one way to introduce the idea of group responsibility and interdependence.

The fact that the concept of voice is commonly associated with an individual can also be beneficial, as it can be used to acknowledge the importance of the individual's knowledge and skills in creating a group product. The communal interactions of the group can allow the individual's voice to be heard. In addition, the concept of voice provides a view of participation which can accommodate both active participants and legitimate peripheral participants. The focus of group dialogue would be on ways that groups structure their own talk to give members opportunities to both speak and be heard. However, this process would also have to be flexible on the question of precisely how that process would be structured and exactly what roles students would play.

For educators, the concept of voice can be useful in identifying barriers to student participation. It provides a warrant for looking at the turn-taking system, the types of knowledge privileged and warrants used to speak acceptably, and who is heard within the class.

The term "voice" was introduced into the 1992 version of the Methods class, which I co-taught with Jerri. It was a useful way to introduce ideas on collaboration and it resonated well with the fundamental principles of Whole Language (e.g., creating communities of learners, organizing themes around students' interests and choices). Naturally, in a teacher education course like the Methods course, the distinction between teacher and student is ambiguous and voice can be introduced as both an aid for students viewing their own group process and as a useful tool for thinking of instructional discourse.

Muting of Instructor's Voice. One of the consequences of organizing the Methods course around small groups is that the instructor's voice is muted. By having students both work in groups without her and engage in teaching much of the course content, the instructor has greatly reduced her ability to directly engage in dialogue with students. Was she also less effective in introducing her students to the discourse of second language teaching, and, ultimately, in persuading students on educational issues?

There are a number of consequences of the muting of the instructor's voice. First, as we saw with Nick, students are at times left with a sense that they have not learned enough about their topic, despite their own commitment and hard work. They feel that they could have learned more about their topic if Jerri had led discussions on issues

central to teaching and helped them explicate their course readings.

Students typically enter the course determined to learn from the instructor and the course readings as much as possible about second language teaching. Interviews suggest that as the course unfolds, students realize the broader vision that the instructor has for the course. The fact that so many of the students leave the course with an appreciation for what they have learned (and how they learned it) suggests that the course is very effective in persuading students toward the instructor's view of teaching and learning. However, not all students leave the course persuaded and, again, this may be because the instructor's voice is muted.

The muting of the instructor's (and facilitators') voice is posited by the instructor as a precondition for student voices to be constructed. As we saw in the Content group, without the teacher they are forced to rely upon their own resources. Further, they are positioned as competent and knowledgeable. The course, in the words of Paulo Freire (1973), invites adults to "believe in themselves" and "believe that they have knowledge." The removal of the instructor's authoritarian voice from the small groups is one way to extend this invitation to the students of the course.

Educators thinking of using this form of education must consider carefully what they want to accomplish with

collaborative groups. If, for example, text explication is crucial, then perhaps the teacher needs a stronger voice in the class dialogue, with a potential for a concomitant loss of student voice. However, there may be other ways to approach this problem without altering the delicate balance between teacher and student voices (see Chapter 5).

This research has unearthed a number of tensions that resulted from this form of education (see Chapters 3 and 6). The point I want to make here is that this form of education needs to be designed with the knowledge that there are consequences for promoting students' voices and tensions are created. In a teacher education course, these tensions can be raised as problematics for reflection within the class, as students need to be aware of these issues in their own teaching. Exploring them can become part of the course curriculum.

Some of the complexities of this type of class become clearer in just these issues. On the one hand, the professor's voice is powerful and speaks through the task structure and the class as a whole. On the other hand, removing the teacher from the face-to-face interactive process has consequences for what is learned and how it is learned. I wonder if Jerri's voice was muted or perhaps simply "ventriloquized," that is, projected through others. The design of this course allows her ideas to be promoted in many different ways. It was amazing that week after week the group presentations reproduced the structure of the

Methods course. Watching this process unfold in the Content group made me realize that the whole ecology of the course provided a chamber in which Jerri's voice could be heard from afar.

Facilitators were also a source of this "ventriloquization." In my role as facilitator, I would often voice Jerri's own ideas within the Content group, not in some mechanical, rote form but because they made sense to me in this context. I also wonder if Jerri's voice was so powerful because of the tension between the course structure that privileged the students' own knowledge and students' desire for an authoritarian voice. The course created a place for students' voices to be constructed, but it also created an environment in which Jerri's voice resounded as well.

The findings reported in the sections above are designed to contribute to a local theory of collaborative teacher education. They are being used to help conceptualize the Methods course. In the fall of 1992, I co-taught the Methods course with Jerri and we used these research findings, along with examples drawn from the Content group meetings (e.g., transcripts) to orient students to the course and to provide a local vocabulary for conceptualizing and discussing issues of collaboration, participation, and voice.

I now turn to a discussion of a generalized theory that has resulted from this research: the voice framework.

The Voice Framework

I am excited about the possibilities of using the voice framework developed in this research for investigating discourse in other settings. It provides a way to conceptualize voice as the communal product of social interaction. Further, it is precise enough to guide researchers to specific forms of data that can inform their analysis of discourse. I believe that it could be used by other researchers interested in participation of conversationalists that is far removed from the present research site. In this sense, I offer the voice framework as (heuristically) acontextual.

This framework, as evidenced by the present research, has three primary strengths. The first rests upon its ability to provide a coherent account of the social organization of voice and its communal properties. In discussing this framework with colleagues, I find that the aspect they often find most intriguing is this view of voice as socially constructed. This has the effect of pushing the analysis beyond the individual and into the social sphere. This aspect of the framework owes much to the ideas of Ray McDermott.

A second strength is its ability to focus research on specific forms of data that are posited as foundational for voice: turns of talk, warrants for talk, and public hearings. Each of these components of voice are materially realized and, hence, available for empirical research. By

"materially realized" I mean that they have a physical reality which can be captured through audio- or videotaping. Finally, a strength of this framework is its ability to help us understand barriers to voice in particular settings. This framework came primarily out of an interest in understanding how the structure of social interactions in a particular setting mute or amplify the voices of conversationalists.

I also have some questions and concerns about the voice framework. First, how can we determine the degree of voice that a person has in a particular setting? The framework provides a set of categories for tracking voice in discourse. A breakdown in any of the three steps can be posited to mute a person's voice. However, in coming to an understanding of a person's voice within a group, additional components must be considered. It is important to complement an analysis of discourse with interviews of participants. Only through an understanding of an emic perspective of a participant, combined with discourse analysis, can we come to some sense of the degree of voice that person has in a particular context.

As we saw with Nick, we have ample data to say that his level of participation, measured in number of turns of talk, was limited. Through discussions, it also became apparent that he was satisfied with that. From an educational point of view, I cannot help but wonder if his own voice could not have been strengthened by designing a task which would have

drawn upon his own knowledge and interests, as we saw in the Brainstorm.

I find it difficult (if not impossible) to assess the degree of voice that a person may have. As we saw with Sachi, the reality of tracking her voice in the fourth group meeting was messy and complex. Like so much of reality, voice is not likely to be a binary distinction (i.e., + or - voice). One possibility is to posit a continuum ranging from mute to full voice. However, while this approach has the advantage of conveying the idea that voice is not binary, it is not at all clear how a position on the continuum is to be assigned. Nor is there any principled method for assessing a cumulative measure of an individual's voice over the course of a meeting or semester.

Another issue is, What is the proper unit of analysis for voice? In this research, I have relied primarily on the speech event as the unit of analysis and it has proven to be a useful way to make sense of the data. However, I am also certain that issues of voice extend across speech events. For example, the inability of a group member to raise an issue in one meeting may be unproblematic, provided that there are subsequent opportunities. Human communication cannot be easily bounded by either space or time.

Conclusion: Teacher Education in the Methods Course

I would like to highlight three issues that have been at the core of both this research project and the Methods course:

1. The use of the classroom as an authentic site for teacher preparation.
2. Collaborative dialogue as instructional discourse.
3. Tensions raised by the structure of the Methods course.

Teacher Preparation

One of the great challenges for teacher educators is to both acknowledge the importance of local context in teaching and prepare students to teach in sites far removed from the site of the teacher education program. The solution to this problem enacted in the Methods course is instructive. The instructor designed a course in which students would be able to engage authentic issues of teaching and learning within the course itself. This required a course structure that provided opportunities to explore issues that are relevant to students' teaching sites. The ability of students to choose a topic of interest and the freedom they had to follow their own interests within that topic allowed students to explore issues that were relevant to their own particular needs. Giving power to the students to make their own decisions was instrumental in shaping the course in ways that could accommodate their diverse needs.

A second feature of the course design that was important for this issue was the creation of a task that required authentic teaching (as discussed above). The process of planning a lesson for classmates and actually doing the teaching was a central feature of the course. It provided an opportunity to confront a host of teaching issues connected to actually using a Whole Language approach in the classroom. It also enriched students' understandings of their group topic by engaging them in a process of praxis (i.e., combining theory, reflection and dialogue, and action).

Collaborative Dialogue

A central focus of this research has been the analysis of collaborative dialogue as a form of instructional discourse. I will not attempt to summarize my findings here, but I do want to raise two core issues. First, collaborative dialogue creates a semiotic space for students to engage the discourse of a field. The dialogue that the Content group engaged in allowed group members to connect course concepts, readings, and their own personal experiences to the topic at hand. The focus of this dialogue could be adapted to the goals of another course by structuring the task differently. However, this form of dialogue provides a rich opportunity for students to become actively involved in reconstructing the knowledge of a field. The second point I want to raise is that, at a

metacommunicative level, collaborative dialogue positioned students as competent--a rare feat in institutions of education.

Course Tensions

In the course of this research, I have uncovered a number of tensions or problematics that this course creates for some students (see Chapters 3 and 6). One set of tensions revolves around the legitimacy of collaborative dialogue as an instructional discourse. Two issues are highlighted in these tensions. First, the absence of the instructor from the small groups creates problems. Students question whether they are learning what they need to be learning in order to prepare for teaching. Second, the instructor's absence makes it more difficult for the instructor to identify what they are learning as legitimate and persuade students of the efficacy of this educational approach.

A second set of tensions raised in this research centers on the experiences of Sachi and, by extension, other international students. The issues explored in Chapter 6 raise a set of fascinating issues which highlight the rather disconcerting ways that solutions to educational problems create their own set of problems. Hence, the move by Jerri to structure the course around collaborative learning in order to allow marginal students to participate in the course both gave them a legitimate role in the course and

also positioned them, at times, as "ESL students" and "aliens."

The host of tensions raised in the course have no pat answers, and I will certainly not attempt any here. However, I would like to make two comments. These tensions need to be identified, named, and made part of the course curriculum, so that students can have an opportunity to discuss them and possibly negotiate a local resolution. Further, they can be used as points of reflection and dialogue for the implications they have for students' own teaching.

An additional comment is related to the role of research in this process. It was through the process of interviewing course participants, observing and participating in the course myself, and analyzing the transcripts that these tensions became apparent. Classroom research can play a vital role in the process of identifying problematic issues in education.

Conclusion

The Methods course has provided a rich site for the exploration of central issues in teacher education. It is a richly conceived and enacted course that challenges teachers to view teaching in terms of collaboration, dialogue, and students' knowledge and interests. It is a course that privileges the voices of its students and yet allows authorities in the field to be heard.

The concept of voice which has emerged from this research attempts to situate the individual within the social web, showing how each articulates with the other. It is my intent that the concept of voice inform both the local theory of the Methods course and also a more generalized theory of communication which will provide insights into other social settings.

APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPTION NOTATION

The following is the transcription notation used in this paper and is adapted from Moerman (1988).

? - Rising intonation

?: - Identity of speaker is unknown

. - Falling intonation

= - Connects two turns of talk with virtually no pause between them

(3) - Pause in seconds

() - Unintelligible

(.) - One beat pause

( ) - Description of non-linguistic responses by participants

/ - Overlap speech

ha - Laughter by speaker

: - Lengthened vowel sound

APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPT OF CONTENT GROUP MEETING FOUR

Speech Event: Collaborative Dialogue

(6)
Lisa: So does anybody have any topic ideas?
(2)
Adrea: I did um I was thinking like mythology might be a fun one to do. um maybe um assign as a homework um assign people to go to the library and look up a myth. Be like the creation myth of one um unfamiliar culture and then think of their own culture myth and their own own religion or culture and then we could work with that as our content matter you know for our content part of the class um have them together in groups and uh sharing their myths and then maybe doing some of the um mental gymnastics type things that the book recommended like categorizing uh making generalization about the myths that they have like um across a lot of creation myths there is similiar aspects and then maybe discuss and speculate on why myths are and you know religion included in myths and you know wh wh what purpose do they provide in society. So there'd be like um it would be a communicative thing and it would be um based on partly based on what they already know you know from their own experiences but um it could also be you know it could also be practicing some necessary sort of school skills like categorization and group work and discussion
Nick: ummhuh
Adrea: and then uh maybe hopefully be a little bit higher order thinking like a little bit you know instead of being very concrete you could go on to a more theoretical level.=
Danielle: =That's great the funny thing I went to a social studies high school class last week and that's what they were doing.=
Adrea: =Really?=
Danielle: =Yeah. and it wasn't ESL it was a regular class and I have a copy actually of the myth that he gave out a creation myth a Chinese creation myth
Nick: hmm
Danielle: of the day that um is pretty basic like it's I don't I'll have to look at it again for the language and stuff but but it was a good thing and it was a good class I mean that was definitely a social studies content oriented if that's the way we wanted to focus which I think is pretty important.
(5)
Sachi: I'm I'm not with reading so um but I'm

wondering if you are going to do this from ESL point of view?
(1)
Adrea: Yeah. It'd be it'd be for a class of well this one idea would be something you could use in a class an ESL class just a plain it doesn't have to be an ESL social studies just any ESL class uh I suppose it would probably be for a more middle level students not as much you know raw beginners and um I was thinking in terms of using that as part of our presentation we have to do like a you know demo lesson type thing so=
Sachi: =Yeah and uh=
Adrea: =so this would be I was thinking this would be like a demo lesson that people would maybe find interesting you know so that we weren't giving them a demo lesson that was really like too too easy and not intrinsically interesting or something.
(1)
Sachi: Yeah but uh my question is maybe you can tell me two (.) two approaches/()
Danielle: /Yeah mmhuh
Sachi: something like that and uh: (.) if we could do both approach to the (.) same (.) area or do or do we have to concentrate on one (.) direction?
(1)
Lisa: /There's no have to's about anything.
Nick: / ()
Lisa: Excuse me go ahead.=
Nick: =I was just going to ask what do you mean from two directions?=
Sachi: = um (.) say like you can do this as a regular social studies class but (.) but uh (.) but to help like ESL student /and
Lisa: /Right: mmhuh
Sachi: this conduct content ha then you can do it as an ESL class
?: mmhuh
Sachi: but in the process of learning language
?: mmhuh
Sachi: but it has con ()
Danielle: Yeah I would like to make a plea for the first one I mean I think I agree I like what you brought up that you know before we talked about two things either we have an ESL class whose goal is an ESL class or we have an ESL social studies class in a high school which maybe all the students are ESL students but it is an ESL social studies class which I think for our purpose for creating a lesson might be better to focus on for a reason that I found in this reading that I did that I just wanted to share that there's um (.) a lot of what we've been reading in class seems to be like for the general class seems so applicable to us when we're talking about Whole Language. And I think um that a lot of what we would do if we were talking about an ESL class would be

reiterating this Whole Language stuff because it's really close to content learning I mean it's basically the same sort of thing. (.) um but this book talked about I don't know it sounded really familiar so I don't know if another book talked about it but two kinds of language proficiency one being interpersonal social proficiency and one being academic and that ESL learners tend to learn social proficiency meaning um being able to communicate you know because that's what's where the real language input is very quickly within two years whereas academic proficiency being mainstreamed into the rest of the school system and be able to (.) deal with the school system just like other um students take a longer time because ESL classes don't tend to prepare kids to do that. They tend to teach kids the Whole Language but it's a different context. You know what I mean? If

Nick: mmhuh

Danielle: if if we concentrated more on ESL I mean also I have a bias toward social studies and I really like that idea and if it was if it were ha I know my subjunctive ha if it were

(Group laughter)

an ESL social studies class maybe we could bring up that issue of of academic content learning

Nick: uh huh

Danielle: to help students enter the school system (2)

Adrea: But I don't I think you're creating you guys both in my opinion are creating like an artificial division that I think Mohan created that I just don't necessarily agree with. Cause I think if you look at it from the Whole Language perspective it's like (2) I don't know this this whether it has to be in a social studies context or not I mean I kind of feel like the whole point is that you know there is no language artificial onto itself

Danielle: /right

Adrea: /so everything is in context so it's it's not as though mythology is like only a social studies thing you know what I mean?=

Danielle: = Yeah it depends upon where the theme is coming from though and it depends upon the purpose of the learners. You know what I mean? and and it depends on who we target the class toward. If we are targeting a class toward say for example adult learners=

Adrea: =mmhuh=

Danielle: =who need to learn English and so we need a theme because we need a content and so people are interested in mythology and that's where comes up or if we are talking about uh: uh second language learning population in a public school system that are younger that need to learn the language not only for social interactions but also to deal with the rest of

the school system.
Adrea: right
Danielle: then the content's coming from another place so it is all Whole Language and it is all experiential learning but it's a little bit different where the material's coming from (.) and also I mean I guess in both (.) places I mean if we do decide on the mythology theme and it is the same but I (.) just found the distinctions in the way that Mohan I don't know if I'm saying this well but/it's it's slight
Lisa: /No you're doing great. Go ahead say it again keep going.
(1)
Danielle: Keep going? ha I think I blocked it ha.
(1)
Lisa: You were just going trying to say something about what Mohan was saying=
Danielle: =Yeah: I mean he made the division and
Nick: mmhuh
Danielle: and I think you know maybe in practice it's not really that different but it does have to do a little bit of where it's coming from and where's it's going I guess rather than what's happening at the time. Which which is going to influence what's what the curriculum at the time. You know?
(1)
Adrea: I don't I'm I'm some how I'm just missing your point but that's all right it's not / I can come back to it
Danielle: /Well I guess I mean I guess what we were talking about is whether um what Sachi brought up is whether it is a content based class or an ESL based class (.) that we're directing our lesson toward.
(2) /Is that
Adrea: /() my theory is just that all language classes whether they are social studies or ESL are content I / mean in my mind
Danielle: /Yeah
Adrea: () should be
Danielle: They all /should be
Adrea: /content so it's like I mean I don't=
Danielle: =but the goal is different (.) right? It depends on your population that/ ()
Adrea: but see that's where I disagree I don't think the goal is necessarily different cause I think that the ESL teacher can't just teach the face-to-face skills and needs to teach the critical thinking skills so I think that that is like an integral part of the ESL teacher's job isn't just to be able to get the kids to socialize their whole point is to be able to get the kids functioning in an academic level of English so that they can survive when they're out of the ESL classroom.
Danielle: yeah
Adrea: to me it's just it's just like a different

label or a different (.) you know teachers in there but it's just /the same goal
Danielle: /but that's still that's still the academic class I mean if you're talking about somebody in an academic environment /then yeah I agree
Adrea: /Right right I guess I'm thinking high school so I'm not thinking you know adult Ed functional (.) like /()
Danielle: /Yeah I guess in high school then (3) the the the different ESL classes are sort of it's an artificial separation when they do separate it. Like I've been observing this this high school teacher who teaches an ESL reading class an ESL writing class ESL grammar class and then an ESL history class
Adrea: Yeah ()
Danielle: and I have a real problem I mean it's just weird that it's really weird that it's divided like that so I totally agree with you that
(5)
Lisa: Did you want to say something? Were you you looked like you were trying to say something.=
Sachi: =No ha=
Lisa: =You're not. Okay.
Nick: I was thinking about music as a subject kind of following up on our (.) talk early on uh and trying to connect it perhaps with um uh traditional music from various cultures and having kids do research about uh traditional instruments maybe uh Japanese shokohatchi or koto and um (.) trying to draw in the cultural aspect through music and and kind of looking at music as a bridge across cultures um that was what I was pondering
(2)
Adrea: That's interesting=
Danielle: =There's a section in here about music.=
Nick: =Yeah
Adrea: How do you envision us doing that in class?
(1)
Nick: Well I don't think I got quite that far ha with it um (1) I'm not sure yet I can think some more about that I guess I was trying to imagine a class of kids and (.) and asking them to do certain things (2) different activities=
Adrea: =That's a neat idea.
(3)
Danielle: The only problem I have with that is is what we're um I mean I guess it depends on how much new stuff we're going to bring in with our with our presentation because if if we did something where we could I mean I sort of liked the separation that that whoever it was in here made about the academic level and the interpersonal level
Nick: uhhuh
Danielle: and and preparing students not only for interpersonal but academic you know to function in the

school environment and I just thought that that might be a new thing to bring in that with an academic theme we could do but maybe we could do maybe we could do it with music I mean music would be fun (.) um but it sort I think we have sort of have to look at what we're getting through the content that we're that we're introducing

?: mmhuh

Nick: mmmhuh

Danielle: what we want the students to gain through the content and culture understanding is a very important um content also=

Nick: =I guess it's depends too on what age group we're looking at I can I see it working perhaps better with younger kids

Danielle: mmm

Nick: than than say with high school kids uh: (2) uh: but I don't know that kind of raises the question for me do we want to try to pin down our audience first or just talk in general terms about what we want to do? and then target (.) target /()

Francis: /One of things that I was thinking about is um (.) if we're going to do this if we're going to do a presentation for act the group that we have do you want something that actually in a sense challenges that group. Not some mythical group that in other words are we going to make a kind of uh fantasy lesson for an audience that we specify or we actully going to make a lesson that would work with the group that we're actually working with? (.)

?: ()

Francis: It seem like there's two different (.) /approaches

Nick: You mean the group the class that we?=

Francis: =Yeah.=

Nick: =Yeah=

Francis: =us and our colleagues=

Nick: =uh huh=

Francis: we could do something /there: where using the same

Danielle: /That's good point

Francis: principles but they would actually be stretched and

Nick: mm

Francis: and challenged in some way

?: mmhuh

Francis: and you know imagine everybody has problems with certain kinds of text imagine if we chose a physics text I'm not suggesting that we do that but just now some people might be very good in physics out there a lot of people wouldn't so we would have to really think about what are the principles? What are the underlying ideas? What are the action sequence that we could give to show them what are the ideas are? Which are sort of Mohan's ideas right? You go

into ESL students they're not they're missing both the practical examples of it and the principles and theory behind it often times they have cultural (.) gaps so if you want one way to do it would be to challenge the group (3) and stretch them or another way would be to just say to them we are going to show you are lesson that you could do with high school students or

Nick: mmhuh

Francis: or grade school /students

Nick: /elementary or whatever

(1)

Danielle: /That's great

Francis: /() Two very different kinds of paths

(2)

Lisa: Yeah well along that line I was just thinking maybe we could use music as the language they have to express themselves in ha then it throws a whole new dimension you know in to Whole Language and how you are expressing yourself not using words using other things

?: ()

Lisa: ha but um (2) I was thinking two things I was thinking uh uh (.) patterns doing something with patterns because it crosses so (.) I mean it's definately a part of all of our lives our patterns and uh it's something that it could be: I think complex in terms of culture and cultural patterns and things that patterns are used for in different cultures or um=

Adrea: =Do I'm sorry do you mean like physical patterns or mental I mean what do you mean?=

Lisa: =all the different. (.) /all how patterns

Adrea: /like plaids?

Lisa: are in our lives. Where we see them? How we use them? um where you find them? because there are patterns in language there are patterns in music there are mathematical patterns there is there are mathematical number patterns there are patterns in nature. There's patterns in design in whatever weaving weaving folk art of the cultures there(.) many many applications of it it is very broad

Adrea: mmhuh

Lisa: um: (2) but then I was also thinking well maybe uh maybe to do something that's really here and now I was thinking of doing something about apples

Nick: mmm

Lisa: because apples are now ha and they'll be happening then too you know and all the different things you can do with apples I mean there are a million things. What they were used for. What they Johnny Appleseed is historical but also food nutrition pesticides pollution farms small farming farming going out of business in this area I mean then you can get into whole product production different apple products

blah blah blah I mean there's a million things but I also love that mythology idea and one of the reasons that I love that mythology idea is that all (.) have our own creation and you could start from your own you know if you're trying to relate it I mean they were talking about in one of these things that we're reading to go from the very specific to the more general you know and how learning is centered around from the individual to like uh publishing where you are reaching out to an entire audience and so uh by doing a creation myth I mean you could even approach it as (2) your your created How were you created? You can create your own creation myth by yourself. You know something very creative and then
(group light laughter)
and I mean there's a million things I think the thing is you can choose any subject we just it's just something we have to be
Nick: sure
Lisa: excited about
Nick: sure yeah
Lisa: as a group and I think that thinking about Francis's idea of something that stretches who is there is really important and I think (.) push you know as I read all this stuff I just keep thinking and I'm so glad that I keep thinking about my own about my own foreign language experiences you know and sitting in a 10th grade French class and saying to the teacher this is stupid
Nick: ha
Lisa: you know what we're doing here this is really stupid ha
Danielle: ()
Lisa: he was really wonderful he didn't say that I was stupid and he didn't throw me out ha so I was grateful. But you know I I think that it's really important to think about that what really excites us.
Nick: yeah ( ) important too
Lisa: and stretching the people who are there and and I think you know I think that we any of these things I love the mythology idea and I think the music idea would be great and I think it would really be neat to try to express yourself in music or movement or something that is foreign you know
Nick: mmhuh
Lisa: where we don't (2) I mean that is going to be the common language. And this is like wow what a concept you know.
(1)
Francis: Let me just throw out one more idea um (.) one idea that I had um is I am teaching an ESL class (.) and one of the things we could do is after the presentation if you all were interested in (.) um we spend the remainder of the time preparing and we could do a lesson or two in my class (.) so you could sort

of /you know
Lisa: /try it out
Francis: Yeah
Danielle: Wow
Francis: Try it out or modify what you do for the first presentation and try it out on the on my students who are all um Chinese mainland or Taiwanese. (2) So it'd be more of a practical first is kind of a theoretical presentation in some sense and then actually trying to hone it down and think about who these people are and what they would need and then actually trying to do something with them (2) so it would be sort of two phases of the process here. If you were interested in that that might influence the kind of thing that you did in the original presentation or not. You could just start over once you have the principles you should be able to /go with it.
Lisa: /Right. What do you think Sachi? You're being quiet tonight.
(2)
(laughter)
(1)
Sachi: I think um I think um yeah I would rather like to decide what ha audience was
(1)
?: ()
Lisa: Wait say what you said /()
Sachi: /Who who are students really um
Nick: /Yeah who who is the audience
Danielle: /Yeah
Lisa: /Who are the students=
Sachi: =( )=
Danielle: =I think I think what Francis said about the class is really our students is is pretty important like that is something ha that I really wasn't thinking.
Nick: mmmm
Danielle: because they all speak English and whatever we're doing I guess I'm a little confused now as to how what is the best way to approach this because all this stuff that we talked about mythology and music (.) and um we would be great ESL lessons and it might be a good thing to model for this class but maybe not necessarily to actually teach to them because it's it's going to be weird. I think in practice especially if we're doing stuff working with small groups and teaching each other if one of the goals is to learn English and we're dealing with an English speaking class if we're going through a lesson it sounds kind of strange. Whereas maybe we could model something like that um and discuss it and do something practical like what Lisa was saying about maybe using the technique but with something like music or movement (2) to to see I don't know to get people to I

don't know how that would work now I heard that it sounds kind of funny to teach a=

Adrea: =Are we all agreed that we want to teach to um teach to the students in our own class? That we want to shoot for their level? I mean I don't think that was necessarily agreed on.=

Nick: =No /no it wasn't.

Adrea: /Does everyone want to do it that way?=

Danielle: =No I didn't mean that. / ( ) to do that

Adrea: /No No I didn't mean to say that I just meant that we had all started talking about it as though it were true already accomplished but Sachi has just said that she

Sachi: what level

Adrea: doesn't necessarily right? You weren't sure that you wanted to teach to that (2) to yeah like have /our lesson aimed at their level

Sachi: /not ( )

Adrea: you know the level of our colleagues or (1)

Sachi: No not that. I mean ha if for instance if we if we assume we are going to do this lesson or this whole thing to for Francis's student I mean that I think will really influence what topics we're going to choose and things like that.

Nick: mmmhuh

Sachi: and uh I don't know ha I kind of stopped with that kind of school situation like high school or something ( ) I've been thinking ( ). (.) ha What should I say?=

Danielle: =I was thinking that also high school students but if we tried to teach it to our class do you know what I mean? it's gonna be a weird dynamic especially if we're doing something learner centered which is (2) pretty (.) wh where this is headed.

?: yeah

Danielle: wh where this would bb basically like if we plan this lesson for high school students we're asking them to be high school students which we could do. Pretend you're/

Adrea: /I don't think we are necessarily asking them to be high school students I mean: we're asking them to um pput aside their disbelief in that they're not practicing well actually half the class is practicing a second language really

Nick: mm

Adrea: if you think about it so that's not that unrealistic um and also you know depending upon what we do instruments or myths or whatever it is information that they didn't have or maybe it's thinking of things in a new way so it's not like we're asking them to you know count apples or something not to

Danielle: ha

Adrea: not to put it on apples apples just came to my mind you know what I mean something that's really like way below their level
Danielle: Yeah
Adrea: because a lot of people in the class could use some
Lisa: Yeah
Adrea: practice before ()=
Lisa: =I think that's true and the other thing I think is um (2) I I've been through a lot of methods classes in terms of teaching music and even when you're trying you know you're teaching music to young children it doesn't even if you're presenting it to adults I mean I think it is harder because it is adults but they are all there for the same purpose. They want to figure out what's a good way of presenting to this particular age group. So they're there for a reason it's not like they're trying to learn the content they're trying to learn the methodology that's what their purpose is so I think I think that you know that it is really important that they get something new from it but I don't think that it's so far fetched for them to you know to say okay well this is going to be presented to a high school class now will this work for a high school class? And that's how they're coming to it.=
Adrea: =That's a good point. (.) That they're analyzing it and they're not just sort of going through it they're critiquing it in their mind and seeing whether it works and /stuff=
Lisa: /right
Danielle: =But in order for it to work they do have to play through it
(2)
(overlap)
?: but then they can use it
?: Yeah right
(1)
Lisa: They're going to be in that situation someday and it's going to be valuable to them or I mean whatever they come out with it with will be valuable whether they hate it or whether they like it will be valuable=
Adrea: =Plus a lot of the group work that we do in Ed classes I don't think is particularly above high school level I mean I think like mental processes wise I mean I don't feel like my brain is being stretched in new and exciting ways every time I get into a group of three around here. You know what I mean?
Nick: mmhuh
Adrea: I don't
(3)
Danielle: Yeah I guess I was just wondering if there was a better way to illustrate it that would make it more personally relevant for the audience. That's

what I was getting/ at like I wasn't saying that
Adrea: / ( ) yeah yeah
Danielle: it's it's bad to do it the way we were planning it I was just wondering if there was another way. (2) But and I agree /that it could work ha
/**Adrea:** /( ) talking about
Danielle: Yeah
Adrea: Yeah yeah or what you were saying like both ways or something=
Lisa: =The other thing that we could do you know talk I mean we're talking about maybe 10 minutes of time for the activity I mean really because there are so many other things that we want to present and for the activity itself I think that really we might be talking about 10 minutes of time. Roughly maybe 15. Because then we want to process that. And one of the things that we might want to do in terms of procesing this okay How would you present this activity or something similiar to it for younger grades? How would you do it for older people? You know how would you change the objectives? So you're saying the central thing and then you're adapting it in many different ways and maybe they can help brainstorm that part so that it's an active thing it's not just a telling thing. The activity is the doing thing and then they could say all right (snaps fingers) brainstorm what could you do for this? What could you do for that? What could you do for this situation? and I think that that might be a way/ to get them
Danielle: /That's true.
Lisa: actively involved
(1)
Danielle: Yeah that depends upon what level we want them I mean if we want to incorporate small group work on what level we want them to participate in the small group work whether it's within the lesson we give or whether it's within the ana analysis of the lesson that we give
Lisa: yeah
(1)
Francis: It's really interesting how you know we're talking about what we're doing. Now we're trying to figure out content and our topic is content
Danielle: ha
Francis: and it's kind of interesting to see you know how how are we thinking of this. You know I we are starting to think about who these people are that we're going to be teaching? right. which is to me the /starting point
Lisa: /the central
Nick: yeah
Francis: is who are these people? Okay we got like 25 colleagues out there what do they need? They need this is their shot at content so what kind of experience do they need backed up with the um readings

that we select
Jerri: We're meeting in the open space(.) after.=
Lisa: =In the open?
Jerri: Yeah where we were last time
Lisa: () down /okay.
Nick: /Okay
(2)
Francis: ( ) I'm just trying to map this onto Mohan's stuff and in some ways doing something like uh uh walking through a lesson or something uh high school lesson is similiar to his his action situations right you know he's trying to first you do some kind of practical example of something then you look at the principles that underlie it so:/ in a sense
Danielle: /mmm
Francis: if we did the kind of thing that you were talking about doing something for 15 minutes or whatever some actual lesson and then having a chance to talk and analyze it that's just the theoretical part (.) right?
Danielle: That's great
Francis: So you've got two components. It's just interesting we're really talking about (.) what we're talking about=
Adrea: =Very appropriate
(chuckling)
(1)
Lisa: But these are the kinds of things that you thnk about all the time when you're teaching I mean what are you presenting and why? why? and you have to be thinking of those things. So I mean ha you don't always get there but ha you have to be thinking about ()
Francis: That's for sure
Lisa: like oh my god I don't know why I'm doing this. I mean finally you do it and you really don't know why you did it oh sh ha /anyway
Adrea: /Do we do we want to talk about um whether we want to um do this with Francis's class (.) afterward?
(1)
Lisa: I think we should just table that and not worry about it right now. / ( )
Adrea: /Okay but are you but you're concerned about that aren't you Sachi? /( )
Sachi: /As far as activities go
Adrea: uh huh (2) so in what way?=
Lisa: =What age group are you working with?=
Francis: =Adults=
Lisa: =Okay
Francis: All um:
Lisa: And what's their level of language speaking at this point?=
Francis: =Intermediate to: um advanced. They're pretty good.

[End of Side One of Tape]

Sachi: ... present this activities to them like we can't pick which content [truck noise] ( ) that's what I ha meant.=
Danielle: =That's a good point.=
Francis: =See I couldn't hear that last part.
(1)
Sachi: What? um like (.) if its whole Chinese I mean everybody is Chinese then we can't really do cross-cultural
Nick: mmm
Sachi: activities.
Danielle: ha=
Nick: =mm makes sense=
Lisa: =That's very true.
(2)
Sachi: Ha that's all I wanted to say.=
Danielle: =That's a good point it would be hard to adapt it ha.
(1)
Francis: I was I wasn't really thinking of making this offer to uh make things more difficult.
Nick: mmmm
Danielle: /ha
Francis: /I was just thinking that often times it's nice after you've played around with theory for a while to actually try something out. So I'm just offering this class as a chance after you get the presentation out of the way f focus we going to meet you know an hour each time we could spend that time actually thinking about okay this is a real lesson with real people. Now it can create either based upon the one you've already done or just something new. whatever was appropriate for the group. It would just be another a second wave and I think a different um
Lisa: Yeah
Francis: activity in a sense
(1)
Lisa: Well I don't have any problem gearing it for you know an advanced intermediate adult class I mean
Nick: mm huh
Lisa: why not? it doesn't matter that's fine why don't we do that? and then can=
Adrea: =It's not as fun if it's not cross-cultural though I mean
Lisa: /( )
Adrea: / since we have to be working with this idea it just seems that it'd be whatever idea it would be I mean this is just my personal feeling I think it is more fun when you are trying to bring different cultural elements /together
Lisa: /Right: I didn't mention cultural stuff I just / said for that level
Adrea: /right

Lisa: gear whatever activity /we have for that level and we can
Adrea: /right
Lisa: not worry about about the cultural stuff I mean in terms of his class.=
Adrea: =I see so like just /shoot
Lisa: /( )
Adrea: for his level /but not
Lisa: /Right:
Adrea: necessarily use the first lesson with the second lesson. (.) Cause what Sachi is saying I think is really relevant
Danielle: Yeah
Adrea: That if we do something that is based on multicultural (.) input from different students and all the students have the same cultural background or very similiar one then our lesson goes (poof sound)
?: Yeah
Adrea: or doesn't have the same um strength that it had before I mean if you're trying to like for example with the instruments if you're suppose to be bringing in something from you're own culture that you know about that's part of you I mean you all can't bring in the same ha instrument or the lesson is not going to work so what I'm saying is that I I have no problem with choosing like the age level but I'm thinking that for me it would be less interesting to gear the lesson to Francis's class but I would rather use the time when our projects completed to come up with a maybe totally different you know /if we end up doing
Nick: /Yeah just tailor it to
Adrea: a cross cultural thing now do something different for Francis's class.=
Danielle: =Or adapt it=
Adrea: =So it /doesn't restrict us
Danielle: /()
Nick: Sure
Adrea: from doing something=
Danielle: =That's a good point.=
Francis: =Make's sense.=
Nick: =Well the Chinese certainly have a rich mythology and if we weere to do mythology I think it would be easy to adapt it
Danielle: Yeah
Nick: to this class. I like the mythology idea. um can you say more about activities that you had in mind? um=
(1)
Adrea: Well I mean we cou you know I was just sort of brainstorming ideas and that one came to mind but um I guess what did I say before? (.) It's all floated out of my head.=
Lisa: =Why don't we/ do one of
Adrea: /that's what brainstorming is all about
Lisa: those things?=

838 **Danielle:** = ha we can make a web.
839 (1)
840 **Lisa:** Yeah let's make a web. Let's do it.=
841 **Nick:** =ha /great idea.
842 **Lisa:** /I mean does anybody h why don't we just go
843 through the mythology thing?=
844 **Nick:** =Sure=
845 **Lisa:** =That's totally fine.=
846 **Adrea:** =Does everyone like that?=
847 **?:** =Yeah=
848 **?:** =Yeah=

Speech Event: Brainstorm

849 **Lisa:** Okay so here we go. ha brainstorm away.=
850 **Danielle:** Here's the center of our web.
851 (2)
852 **Francis:** Should we do it on the board? er
853 **Lisa:** Oh we have a b this way (.) we could Xerox it
854 (.) if we wanted to
855 **?:** hmmm
856 **Adrea:** That's true
857 **Francis:** ()=
858 **Lisa:** =So if you can see /it
859 **Adrea:** /Will it come out on that um in that pen (.)
860 on that paper?=
861 **Lisa:** =I thought it would.=
862 **Danielle:** /We could do it at the same time
863 /(multiple voices)=
864 **Adrea:** =We could all do our own little webs.
865 **Nick:** ha
866 (3)
867 **Lisa:** I ( ) trade pens with you=
868 **Francis:** =sure=
869 **Lisa:** =ha it doesn't matter however (.) anyway (3)
870 So/ (.) go ahead=
871 **Danielle:** /()
872 **Danielle:** =I was just wondering ha if I should write
873 /this down
874 **Adrea:** /Go ahead if you want to write it write it
875 down otherwise we'll have /( )
876 **Lisa:** /( ) we can Xerox it=
877 **Danielle:** =okay
878 (2)
879 **Lisa:** So: we're talking about creation myths right?
880 that was one thing
881 **Nick:** mmhuh
882 **Lisa:** What else?
883 **Nick:** mmm
884 **Adrea:** There are like good um like good spirits and
885 bad spirits type thing
886 (1)
887 **Lisa:** Oh this is like different from creation myths

Danielle: yeah
Lisa: This is like spirits=
Adrea: =I don't know. (.) Yeah yeah this would be different yeah like spirits activities of spirits or stories about spirits=
Lisa: =I was thinking women
Adrea: uh huh
Lisa: Of course there's man can't never forget that (laughter) (2)
Danielle: um what about like cultural myths? You know the cultural perception myths e=
Lisa: =How things came to be?=
Nick: =Right exact that's just /the phrase I was thinking of
Danielle: /mmmmm/mmm
Adrea: /Origins. (.) Is that what you mean?=
Danielle: =No but that's a good one. ha (laughter)
I meant like um misperceptions like you know /()
Lisa: /ah: myth myths ha=
Danielle: =Yeah like a cultural myth about a certain group like stereotypes sort of you can branch all this off each other misperceptions ha sterotypes
(5)
Lisa: Creation myths so the Bible I don't know what other ones. What are other ones?
(1)
Adrea: Everyone's got /one.
Lisa: /The Big Bang ha
Danielle: Yeah the Big Bang
Lisa: ha
Nick: The flood
Danielle: you co scientific=
Nick: =The flood (2) you know I think most cultures have a (2) /myth concerning that=
Lisa: /ah: so like destruction
Nick: mmmm
Lisa: total destruction so it's like the opposite of creation
Nick: mmm
(5)
Adrea: Nuclear war. ha
Danielle: ha
(2)
Francis: Not a myth ha a reality /that hasn't happened yet ha=
Danielle: /mmm
Lisa: =but it's like it's taken on mythical proportions=
Nick: =Sure=
Danielle: =That's true=
Lisa: =I mean there's the apocolypse now you know it's like this
(2)
Adrea: (whisper) Can I have a carrot?=

Danielle: =mm does anyone else want a carrot as I sit here
Nick: No thanks ha
Danielle: munching into our tape recorder
(1)
Adrea: =you're making me hungry I wasn't even hungry before
Nick: ha
(1)
Lisa: Sachi (.) anything comes to mind?=
Danielle: =Would you like a carrot? ha
(1)
Sachi: ha okay great. Thank you=
Danielle: =Nick?
Nick: =mm thanks
(5)
Lisa: What's what are some Japanese myths?
(carrot crunching)
(2)
Sachi: mmm=
Nick: =It's like the origin of the Jap/anese
Sachi: /Yeah think same probably how Japan was created and (1) /()
Francis: /Origin would be a neat one
?: mmm
Francis: because people could go back to their own
Nick: yeah
Adrea: mmhuh
Francis: ancestoral origin myths you know?
Adrea: mmhuh
Francis: you get a lot of diversity that way
(3)
Adrea: I think /religion
Nick: /()
Adrea: oh sorry Nick
(1)
Nick: uh oh I was just going to say maybe the mythology of (.) of the Earth in relation to (.) the rest of the universe
Adrea: mmhuh
(3)
Francis: Or man and nature=
Nick: =Yeah
(1)
Adrea: Woman and nature=
Lisa: =Is that what you mean?
(1)
Francis: And woman and nature too.
Nick: mmm
Francis: don't want to forget women=
Nick: =Yeah I guess interpretations of you know what's what the sky is what what are the stars and the planets and
Adrea: mm
Francis: oh

Nick: you know difficult /to say about that
Francis: /The big picture.
Nick: Yeah=
Daniell: =The ha big picture ha
(laughter)
(2)
Adrea: I said religion.
(1)
Lisa: Yes /I got it it's down.
Adrea: /( ) Okay
(3)
Lisa: Did we say cultural ones yet?=
Nick: = Yeah: /Danielle did
Lisa: /Because like I'm I'm thinking as you say that I'm thinking (.) the African (.) myths about how things were created
Nick: mmhuh
Lisa: origins /are very strong
Nick: /mmm yeah
(1)
Danielle: Doesn't it (.) tie with creation myths?=
Lisa: =Yeah. It's all branching off of creation myths.
(1)
Francis: There's also another set of myths about /myths ( ) about other people
/(laughter and multiple side talk)
Lisa: /How other people came to be?=
/(laughter and side talk)
Francis: =Yeah like the Chinese have some myths about um Japanese I think. (2) Isn't that right? how Japanese came/to be
Adrea: /straight from hell
Nick: ha
(laughter)
Sachi: Really?=
Francis: =Yeah. Monkey and man combination things. Myths that people tell (.) about other groups.
Danielle: mmm
Nick: uh huh
Lisa: This was Chinese you were saying or Japanese or ()?=
Francis: =uh Chinese myth I think. (.) kind of insulting myths=
Nick: =Yeah /usually they're
Lisa: /creation myths
Nick: pretty chauvanistic kinds of things.=
Francis: =Yeah. They're interesting though ha
Nick: Yeah
(3)
Lisa: Well when we're talking about mythology it seems like so many things are stemming out of creation myths /(.) and (.) is
Nick: /mm
Lisa: that (6) I mean it seems like this is becoming

its own center (.) creation myths is=
Adrea: = It's kind of the big question (.) you know why are we here? Where did we come from? (.) Don't you think?
(1)
Nick: But I also think that what you said Lisa earlier about why things are the ways they are (.) that's what I think then so it's not just creation but why why the mountains are there or why we have the ocean
Adrea: uh huh
Nick: uh:=
Danielle: =Yeah /not just human
Nick: /( )
Daniell: cre creation but
Nick: Yeah
Danielle: natural /creation
Nick: /yeah
(5)
Nick: why (.) why people (.) getting back to humans you know why people have why they are the way they are you know why they have certain personalities (.) or certain kind of make up=
Danielle: = mm ethnicities
Nick: yeah (barely audible)
Nick: Yeah /I didn't know
Francis: /( )
Nick: a good word for it ha
Danielle: Yeah
(2)
Francis: Why there is ESL.
Danielle: ha why there is ESL
Nick: ha
Fredia: So this kind of gets into philosophy doesn't it? (2) now we're starting to get (.) like into philosophy of of things
(3)
Adrea: Maybe we should like hand out joints or something ha
(laughter)
everyone can get really deep /about
Danielle: /That's on tape
(laughter)
Adrea: Yeah I Danielle just said that
(laughter 7 sec.)
Francis: Well it's still not illegal to talk about it
Danielle: Ha
Francis: Reagan didn't get his way
Nick: Ha=
Lisa: =He was smoking when he said it ha ( )
(laughter)
Francis: as we all ha know:
(Overlap talking and laughing)
Frank and their menage et tua
(laughter 4 sec.)

Lisa: Oh man ha ha all right good and bad spirits hey ha /ha
Adrea: /Reaganomics
Lisa: Okay
Danielle: Ah that's a good myth Reaganomics
(laughter)
Adrea: It's a nightmare.=
Danielle: =Politics are is /a myth.
Lisa: /Yes politics this is such an interesting thing I think that comes from man don't you?
(laughter 5 sec.)
(2)
no
Nick: I think we could also look at myths in terms of cultures like Chinese myths Native American myths /uh: Greek
Lisa: /yeah:
Nick: myths uh:=
Adrea: =What about them?=
Nick: =/We can look at it
Danielle: /() Greek and Roman mythology
Nick: in that kind of classification too that (3) you know look at Hopi myths and Chinese myths=
Adrea: =Oh like comparative?=
Nick: =Yeah com yeah thank you.
(laughter)
Adrea: Your welcome
Nick: My vocabulary /tonight is
Adrea: /It's getting a little late
Nick: lacking you know ha
(overlap)
Lisa: I'm just /looking at how I jotted this down and
Nick: /( )
Lisa: I took creation myths aside because we started talking about Chinese creation myths African creation myths Native American down here then stereotypes is right above it and I think there's a real connection there between you know um (2) you know just the the um (.) African myths that I've read and Black American folktales that I've read and just the way that the characters are dealt with in those things I somehow has reinforced some of those stereotypes.
Nick: mmm
Danielle: and I think that those things are connected you know the way the mythology of people the cultures of people and then this it's it's there is a generalization that takes place and then there's a stereotype that comes from that generalization and then the myths and everything go away and the ha stereotype remains you know and=
Danielle: =Yeah I think I think a lot of the web stuff could overlap like that/like that has
Lisa: /yeah
Danielle: to do with ethnic conflicts also
Lisa: Right.

Danielle: and um
(4)
Adrea: Cool.
(4)
Lisa: Okay.
(2)
Adrea: So what do we do with this now?

APPENDIX C

THE CONTENT GROUP'S PRESENTATION PACKET

The materials in Appendix C were created by the Content group as they planned their presentation. The "Workshop Outline" provides a lesson plan for their presentation. The page headed "Introduction--Content-based Learning" is a summary of key ideas about their topic. The third page of the packet is a handout they provided their classmates a week prior to their presentation to prepare them for the actual presentation. The fourth page of the packet is a bibliography on content-based learning that they handed out to their classmates at the end of the presentation. The final page of the packet is a compilation of lesson plans created by the various small groups as part of the presentation. This packet was handed in to the instructor as part of the course requirements.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

I. Regular method groups meet to plan an activity

(10 min) 1. Content person gives brief introduction in each group about the exercise and summarizing the main points on content

(30 min) 2. Groups organize an activity for class described in handout. They are given six large pieces of paper on which to record the different components of their plan (see ORGANIZING INFORMATION).

II. Class meets as a whole, with each group's papers on the wall.

(25 min) One member from each group briefly runs down group's plan on papers.

III. Discussion with the main points recorded on board

(25 min) 1. How have various class members (particularly non-native English speakers) experienced content-based instruction?

2. What are some of the possible problems or benefits of content-based ESL teaching?

INTRODUCTION - CONTENT-BASED LEARNING

1) What are the problems in integrating foreign students into academic classes? How do you close an information gap? (language/content duality)

   - Familiarity with subject helps. Also cultural familiarity, familiarity with educational system.
     BISC and CALP discrepancy

   - Some possibilities offered:
     - ESL language class (may lack content base)
     - Content classes for foreign speakers in their native language (school may or may not be able to provide these because of budgetary or personnel constraints)
     - ESL content class (may focus too specifically on "functional" content, i.e., content needed for the workplace, or for a specific subject area)
     - Mainstreaming foreign students (must integrate abilities of native and foreign speakers)

   - Students have certain abilities in their own language, but can't express them in the foreign language. People tend to evaluate comprehension based on one's ability to express oneself.

2) How to make content accessible? Mohan's idea of an "activity" as a way of integrating language learning and subject matter learning. Non-linguistic and linguistic discourse influence understanding of language.

   - There seems to be a correlation between practical activity and language learning. Activity gives students opportunity to reflect afterwards.

   - Transferable language and thinking skills to be applied across the curriculum and to life in general.

   - What is an "activity"? It can be anything that provides a context for discourse. Handout talks about an activity being:

     - Interesting to the students
     - Can be as simple as a graphic chart, or as involved as a field trip, scaffolding, simplifying, etc.
     - Stretches learners cognitively and linguistically, and ideally can accommodate heterogeneous groups, and facilitate multidimensional learning.
       PATTERN OF ACTION: description, sequence, choice
       BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE: classification, principles, evaluation

3) What's difficult for you in dealing with context in your second language? Use these experiences to help create a lesson for the class described in the handout within your group's area of expertise. Suggest that they have roles.

For part of our class on the 31st of October, you will be working in the same groups that you have been working in for your presentations. Your task, as a group, will be to create a lesson plan on the topical theme of Halloween. You will use your personal expertise in your group subject area, and integrate this background knowledge with the information that we present to you on content area learning. We are giving you some information now to give you some more time to think, but you will have time with your group during the class to construct the actual lesson plan. Feel free to act on any of your own personal ideas on the meaning of content learning.

We have developed a description of the class for whom you will be writing this lesson as well as the context of the lesson.

The class is a Social Studies Class, entitled "World Cultures." Over the course of the year they will be studying a variety of themes relating to culture and applying them to different peoples around the globe. For the past three weeks, they have been working on the theme of mythology. They started the unit with the examination of creation myths from various cultures. After creation, they examined various myths pertaining to good and evil. The third week was focused on myths used in popular writing and film -- for example, science fiction movies, Garcia Marquez, Tolkien... As the class has showed interest in the theme of myth and lore, and was very interested about any United States traditions concerning myths, and today is Halloween, it seems appropriate to take advantage of the real existing situation and include it in our mythology unit.

So think about how your particular group's subject area could be used in forming a lesson plan concerning Halloween for an ESL Social Studies class that has been working on a mythology unit. Next week we will give you an introduction to content area teaching from our group study experience before you break off into groups to write your lesson plan.

THE CONTEXT: The ESL "World Cultures" class consists of 20 students, freshmen and sophomores, ranging in age from fourteen to eighteen. It takes place in a vocational high school in Springfield, where the desks and chairs and bolted into rows. There are six Vietnamese girls, five Vietnamese boys, four Puerto Rican girls, one Russian girl, two Russian boys and two Ukrainian boys (who are fluent in Russian). Although nominally an intermediate course, the range of levels is quite varied, with one Russian boy and one Vietnamese boy seemingly totally dependent on peer translation. The class, which meets daily for 45 minutes, is not yet one community, but two. The Russian and Ukrainian boys mix easily with the Puerto Rican girls. They sit together on one side of the room. All of the Vietnamese students sit together and interact among themselves on the other side. The Russian girl sits alone toward the middle. One Vietnamese boy often visits one of the Puerto Rican girls on her side of the room. The teacher has had no discipline problems with the students, who are generally cooperative, cheerful and who seem eager to learn English. While they show reluctance to work in integrated groups, it seems to be a question of unfamiliarity rather than hostility.

ORGANIZING INFORMATION

Tonight's lesson is related to **HALLOWEEN**

Description of Activity:

Important Objectives:

Opportunities for Language Development:

Thinking process skills/ Analytical skills

Halloween Info:

Materials Needed:

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CONTENT-BASED LEARNING

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LESSON PLANS GENERATED DURING CONTENT-BASED LEARNING PRESENTATION - OCT. 31, 1991

	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	OPPORTUNITIES FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	THINKING SKILLS ANALYTIC/THEOR.	HALLOWEEN INFO	MATERIALS
SIMULATION GROUP	K-MART STORE WINDOW: 3 teams are each assigned a window. They write a proposal for window decoration, and then decorate.	1. working together 2. info. acquisition 3. identify cultural symbols 4. use lang. of negotiation 5. use halloween language	1. negotiating the proposal 2. presentation of proposal to manager	1. communication skills 2. collaborating skills 3. writing skills 4. presentation skills	1. vocabulary 2. history 3. roots/origins of customs 4. different cultures' contributions to US. Halloween, Catholic	1. construction paper, crepe paper, glue, markers, scissors, tape/gum, candy
RESPONDING TO WRITING GROUP	SPIRIT DICTIONARY: Group writing to produce a cultural dictionary of spirits. (illustrated)	1. vocabulary 2. collaboration 3. improving reading, writing & oral skills 4. learn about superstitions in other cultures 5. comparing/contrasting superstitions & myths	1. group collaboration 2. opportunity to share writing on a meaningful topic 3 improve listening 4. improve reading skill.	1. learn to make dictionary (or Beastiary!) of terms. 2. cataloging types of spirits from each culture 3. learn to alphabetize	Describe history & origin of All Hallows Eve. (This holiday derives from a pagan belief.)	paper, pencils, imagination
LITERATURE GROUP	CREATING A PIECE OF WRITING: Teacher designs groups of 4 students students brainstorm the project and decide their roles for completing the project	1. researching material 2. writing collaboratively 3. to mix the students				- Vocabulary list (Generated by students' research) - Books, photos, masks, Jack-o-lantern - Paper, pens, markers, crayons, etc.
PROBLEM POSING GROUP	ROLE PLAY HALLOWEEN: - Description of Halloween (story) - Dispelling anxieties or fears w/info on Halloween	1. Lessen anxieties 2. Impart info. on subject 3. Teach language 4. Prepare students for unfamiliar cultural event.	1. story reading 2. specialized vocab. 3. pictures 4. costumes 5. parties/trick or treat 6. small groups/pairs to encourage getting to know each other better	1. Problem Posing tools for dialog: - what is problem? - have you experienced this? 2. Synthesis 3. Generalization based on facts (each step is a way to involve something other than analysis)	Customs of Halloween	pumpkins, candy, costumes, pictures, story, trick or treat, party.
READING AND WRITING GROUP	LEGEND of SLEEPY HOLLOW Elicit information about Halloween. Fill in info that's important Tell legend of sleepy Hollow Ask questions about story Talk about their own myths from countries that are similar to Halloween.	1. learn about Halloween and history 2. Appreciate history from other cultures 3. build cross-cultural awareness 4. build oral & written language skills	1. listening to story 2. folklore as a genre 3. vocabulary development 4. oral communication 5. writing	1. Making inferences 2 Understand main idea 3. Generalize	1. Folklore - Multicultural 2. Basic background 3. Legend of Sleepy Hollow.	- Book: Legend of Sleepy Hollow - Paper

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